

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR NEWSLETTER

Number 40



Nov 20, 1975

National Office Address and Phone: As in the last newsletter, please note the change. Our new mailing address is P. O. Box 20184, Chicago, Illinois 60620. Our new phone number is (312) 651-1583. As always, there is someone at this phone number 24 hours a day.

NIC Meeting: Minutes from the NIC meeting, held in Detroit on the 15th and 16th of November are enclosed. There have been some changes, as you can see from the Minutes. We are now officially Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Period. The draft program was discussed and adopted, with some changes (more on that later). The next meeting of the National Steering Committee was postponed; it is now scheduled for the middle of February in Chicago. And the NIC decided to go to work on the planning for a Bicentennial Demonstration to be held in Philadelphia on July 4th (and at least one day earlier) 1976. In order to support and get out The Veteran consistently, the NIC decided that chapters should hold regular fund-raising parties for the paper, and that, in the future, chapters will pay 10¢ per paper instead of the 5¢ per paper they are now paying (at least most are paying).

Program: The National Office hopes to have the program printed and ready to go within a month. The version of the program adopted by the NIC is based on the draft which was sent to all chapters before the NIC meeting, though there are a number of changes. This program will be printed up in pamphlet form, something like the form that the old pamphlet "What Is VVAW/WSO" took. It is not planned as something to hand out like a leaflet, but a mass agitational tool to be given (or sold) to vets who express an interest in the organization. At its most basic level, the program says who we are.

With that in mind, chapters should take the time to look at the program in the immediate future and get your ideas on it in to the National Office. The program particularly needs vivid and living examples, both for the text and in photos which can be used along with the text. The more comments and ideas that are supplied by the chapters, the more the program pamphlet will be what you want.

As usual printing the program will depend on bucks. Also as usual, we don't have any. At the very least, chapters have to let us know, at least generally, how many of the pamphlets they think they will want--that will give us the chance to do some planning. We also don't see the pamphlet as a permanent thing--we know that the experience of chapters is going to make the pamphlet richer by the time we are ready to reprint it.

DOC-B00022

The National Office has some copies of the draft program which was sent out before the NIC meeting. If chapters can use them for discussion before the final version comes out, let us know.

Bicentennial Demonstration: Everyone in the organization must be involved in planning for and building this demonstration. It should be a great event, not only a high point in our day-to-day work, but also as something we can build from after it is over. In the near future, probably the next newsletter, we will be putting out some general guidelines for people to think about concerning this demonstration.

The Veteran: We are planning (always, money permitting) to have the next issue printed by the 1st of December, and will be getting it out to chapters shortly thereafter. Material for this issue should already be in to the National Office. We also need to know how many copies you want, remembering that they now cost 10¢ each, and when you fail to pay for them, you are in fact ripping off the rest of the organization. If we do not hear by the 28th of November, we'll assume that you want the same number of copies you have gotten in the past.

Vets' Notes: As requested by many people in VVAW, the national newsletter will begin with this issue to carry information concerning the status and changes in vets' benefits, particularly the GI Bill.

In the last two newspapers, and in the upcoming paper, there were articles concerning the status of the GI Bill for people who will be going into the military in the future. Currently, the House of Representatives has voted to abolish the GI Bill in its current form for people who will be going into the military after December 31, 1975. This change, originally proposed by the President, is now awaiting approval in the Senate.

By means of a presidential proclamation, Ford has already abolished benefits other than educational for persons who went on active duty after May 6, 1975. The benefits now lost include non-service connected disability pensions, burial allowances, and non-service connected death pensions for widows and surviving children, among others. Ford did this by declaring that the Vietnam era was over, thus ending "wartime" benefits--one more indication that the people who rule this country and who lost the war in Indochina would like to have the American people forget that war as soon as possible.

Other updates include: For any person who served on active duty after January 1, 1955, there is a period of ten years after discharge, or next May 1, 1976, whichever comes later, that applications must be made for these funds. As we discovered during the NIC meeting, there are vets (including those in VVAW) who do not realize that among the many restrictions on the GI Bill is the one which says it must be used within ten years of discharge from the military.

The deadline for farm cooperative, apprentice or on-job training for flight training ends August 10, 1977, or ten years after discharge, whichever comes later.

Anyone who enters the service regardless of date and is disabled in the service will continue to receive compensation and dependents' benefits on a par with wartime veterans (that is, \$36 per month for 10% disability, etc). There is also no time limit on healthcare at VA facilities for World War I, World War II, Korean War, Cold War (that's the time inbetween Korea and Vietnam), or Vietnam-era veterans.

More Attacks on Vets: According to information received from Cincinnati VVAW, there are pilot programs being planned by the VA around more ways to cutback on the GI Bill without having to admit that's what they're doing. For instance, they plan to deny GI Bill benefits to vet/students for classes taught by teaching assistants, for oversize classes (which, given the situation in many large schools, is almost all of them), for incompletes, as well as for missing more than three classes during a quarter.

Many of these schemes, as well as other VA plots, fall under what is called the Satisfactory Pursuit of Educational Objectives policy, bureaucratic gobbledegook for "screw the vet and save some nickels." And the vets there are joining to fight these attacks.

The National Office needs to know if the same kind of thing is coming down in other places; while most of these restrictions are not yet in force in Ohio, we can be sure that if they are being planned there, they will also get around to the rest of the country. So, please check it out and let us know.



Enclosures: There are a number of items included with this newsletter and the NIC Minutes. First, is a leaflet from Chicago VVAW which people should take a look at. First, the graphic is great and other chapters might well be able to make use of it in the future. Second, the purpose of the leaflet--it is a sum-up of the Vets Day action here in Chicago, and is being passed out at all the places where the leaflet to build for that action was passed out. It is localized and builds on the things which vets in Chicago saw happening, whether in person or on TV on Veterans Day in Chicago. It makes no extravagant claims for the chapters' Vets Day action but reported what happened--and makes a special pitch for the need of other people to join the chapter and the struggle the chapter is waging. As suggested in the NIC Minutes, it begins to mention the Bicentennial, pointing out how that celebration is going to be used by the US government and those who stand behind it. And it gives people getting the leaflet something to do--a party and a meeting.

All of these are good things toward building the struggle of vets, and involving new veterans in that struggle. The leaflet also points to the fact that the same kind of demonstrations were going on around the country--that is, the struggle here is not isolated--and clearly points at the VA as part of the overall system which is attacking veterans as well as all working and poor people.

Also included with the newsletter is a copy of the newsletter from the Indo-China Solidarity Committee which is full of good information. Since copies of this newsletter were available at the NIC meeting, and since we can save a few cents on postage, we are not sending this report to those chapters which already have it.

Finally, enclosed with the mailing is an order form for a number of publications from the Peoples Republic of China. For people who have not previously received these items through the mail, or have not seen them at all, they are more than worth the price.

Working through China Books and Periodicals here in Chicago, we have made a deal; if you will order any or all of these publications, and send the order through the National Office, we will take care of getting the orders to China books and will be able to pick up a 25% discount as a result--that money we will use for such necessities as printing up the program and the next issue of the paper. Checks for any or all of the items in the subscription list should be made out to China Books & Periodicals and sent here to the National Office.