



The Guidon

National Newsletter of VVAW

Spring 2003

Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld: The New American Empire and War

Barry Romo and Joe Miller

Whether the US goes to war with Iraq or not (and they probably will), our country is on the path to perpetual war.

The real "axis of evil" is in Washington, and they are planning for constant confrontation with any state that reaches the level of even potential regional power.

Just a year and a half ago, the trio was putting us on a confrontational path with China.

Warships were deployed to the Straits of Taiwan, the propaganda against China was heightened, the military journals had articles speculating on various scenarios, and our spy planes were crashing into Chinese territory. Heroes weren't yet the police and fire departments of New York City, but rather, pilots and military intelligence folks stepping off a plane after spending some

continued on page 8





For Veterans, Peace and Justice Since 1967

The Guidon is the national newsletter of VVAW. As a supplement to the *The Veteran*, our semi-annual newspaper, it is meant to inform and present issues and events that our members and supporters may find important.

NATIONAL COORDINATORS

Barry Romo (773) 327-5756

Pete Zastrow (847) 864-3975

Joe Miller (217) 328-2444

David Cline (201) 876-0430

John Zutz (414) 372-0749

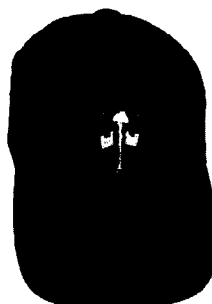
NATIONAL STAFF

Bill Branson, David Curry & Jeff Machota

For a complete list of contacts,
go to www.vvaw.org
or see the next issue of *The Veteran*

PO Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
www.vvaw.org
vvaw@prairienet.org

To order VVAW t-shirts, hats & buttons, send your money to our PO Box in Chicago. Include \$4 for shipping the first item and \$2 for each item after (excluding buttons).



one size - \$12



\$1



L, XL, XXL - \$12

photos in this issue of Janaury 18th D.C. demo courtesy of Curtis Nelson and John Zutz

January 18 Anti-War March in D.C.

John Zutz

It was chilly in Washington, twenty degrees, January 18th. A brisk, sunny day. A day when hundreds of thousands of people would try to influence our government to stop the war against Iraq.

Hundreds of thousands of people from all ages, and callings stood up to be counted against the war. Around 300 of those were veterans, family and friends. The VFP and VVAW banners may have been the most photographed of any present.

The creativity was enormous. Some protest signs were plain. Many were elegant. A few were flamboyant. It seemed each placard was more exquisite than the last.

The energy built, along with the size of the crowd, during the two hours of speeches. Then

someone with a mike said "Start walking," and the march began. It was total anarchy, blocks of people trying squeeze into a much narrower street. The DC Police said "this was the biggest anti-war demonstration in DC in thirty years."

All the marchers were smiling.

The veterans contingent commandeered a small triangular shaped park on Pennsylvania Ave. The group, with banners high, began reciting cadences to the passing crowd for over an hour. The marchers joined the cadences, and applauded as they passed.

The few counter protesters were lost in the huge crowd.

From the time the lead marchers arrived at the end, it was about five hours before the tail arrived. It's time for more people to stand up.

Vets Report From NYC On 2/15/03

David Cline

Several months ago, Vietnam vets, Igor Bobrowsky, Stewart Nusbaumer and Jan Barry, began a new website, Veterans Against Iraq War www.vaiw.org to foster a coalition that could give expression to widespread sentiments in the veterans community against Bush's rush to war.

A statement of purpose expressing opposition to a pre-emptive attack on Iraq was posted with a request for veterans and family members to sign. To date, this petition has received 1464 signers, many of whom are not affiliated with existing veterans peace organizations. The brief comments posted on the 'Sound Off' board give a real sense of the broad range of feelings motivating opposition to Bush's war.

The website also has a poll asking whether we should (a) have a separate vets demonstration or (b) march within a non-vet, regular demonstration. This vote has consistently been over 2 to 1 for a "stand alone" vets action.

I was asked to join the VAIW steering

committee and participated in several meetings in New York City to discuss the next steps. We expanded the steering committee to include Diane Carlson Evans (Vietnam Women's Memorial Project), John Greeley (Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation), Woody Powell (Veterans For Peace), Barry Romo (Vietnam Veterans Against the War), Charles Sheehan-Miles (Vets for Common Sense) and Jaime Vazquez (Jersey City Office of Vets Affairs).

We also began discussing the prospects of holding a veterans demonstration and lobbying effort in Washington, which we have named Operation Dire Distress, taken from the US Flag Code which states "The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property" (Sec. 8 a), an eerily accurate description of the condition our nation faces today.

continued on page 7

VVAW and School Visits

Joe Miller

One of the most important areas of VVAW's work is the visit to schools - high schools, community colleges, universities, etc. This is especially important in the run up to another war, but it is always central to our continuing fight against attempts to rewrite the history of the Vietnam war. We should not be surprised that our role as active opponents to "our" war is conveniently left out of the history books. For most of these young people, all Vietnam vets were hounded, harassed and spit upon by the anti-war movement. They just "know" this to be a fact, and no one tells them any different.

The most difficult thing about this effort is the connections you need make with teachers who may bring you back again and again. At the high school level, this may be particularly difficult, due to the rather controlled nature of the high school environment. If you have kids in school it becomes easier, since they can make the approach to social studies teachers to invite you in. High school administrators may try to place obstacles in your way, but I have found that mention of the court cases covering access to schools by people presenting an alternative to military service can do wonders. And now, with Bush's "Leave no child behind" rules that require high schools to provide military recruiters with contact information for senior students, it may be easier to make the argument for alternative information.

Colleges and universities do not have

such obstacles, so it is merely a question of making contact with social science instructors who would probably be very interested in providing you with a platform. A personal letter from you, describing your military background and expressing an interest in presenting information to students, is a good place to begin. Even if you may have done limited public speaking, you have information that no one else in that classroom has, so you should not be shy about sharing it. Believe me, it gets easier each time you do this.

Here are some resources you should consult in preparation for these school visits:

Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft
(COMD)

<http://www.comdsd.org/youth.htm>

"Using Equal Access to High Schools"
http://www.comdsd.org/article_archive/9thcirintro.htm

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
(CCCO)

<http://www.objector.org/>

National Youth & Militarism Program (AFSC)
<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/default.htm>

"Youth, Militarism, and Alternatives"
(Romo and Curry)
<http://www.vvaw.org/sprsum99.html/youthmil.html>



VVAW Speaks at U.S. Labor Against War Meeting

Bill Davis

In early January, more than one hundred unionists - elected officials, staffers, and rank and file members, came to Chicago to form a new organization, U.S. Labor Against the War. U.S. Labor Against the War plans to organize a union presence in the larger anti-war movement.

The group's formation is a result of anti-war unionists coming together from New York, Chicago and other cities. As of mid February at least seventy union locals, sixteen regional/district labor bodies, thirty four central labor bodies, two state labor federations, and twenty seven ad-hoc committees have joined Labor Against the War.

The night before the founding meeting a large crowd heard two Vietnam veterans, Dan

Lane and myself, speak to our experiences as veterans active in the labor movement.

Dan Lane was a leading rank and file activist in the struggle against A.E. Staley, in Decatur, Illinois.

I'm a Chicago chapter member of VVAW and chief steward for the International Association of Machinists, Local 701 at UPS Chicago. I informed the audience about the effects of war on working class families and what people should expect when joining the military. I'm also a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor and am on the steering committee of Chicago Labor Against the War. C.L.A.W. participated along with VVAW in the February 15 demonstrations in Chicago and New York.



SUPPORT VVAW! DONATE OR JOIN TODAY!

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.

VVAW Membership

P.O. Box 2065, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2065

Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail address _____
Dates of Service (if applicable) _____
Branch _____
Unit _____
Overseas Duty _____
Dates _____
Military Occupation _____
Rank _____

- ☐ Yes, add me to the VVAW e-mail list
☐ I do not wish to join, but wish to make a donation to the work of VVAW

Membership in VVAW is open to ALL people who want to build a veterans' movement that fights for peace and justice. Most of our members are veterans of the Vietnam era, but we welcome veterans of all eras, as well as family members and friends to our ranks. The annual membership fee is \$20.00 (not required of homeless, unemployed or incarcerated vets).

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for the day to day organizational leadership of VVAW and issuing national publications.

Signature _____
Date _____
Total Amount Enclosed _____

(Make checks payable to VVAW. Contributions are tax-deductible.)

Beware of VVAW AI

This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist." Though few in number, they are highly mobile and may show up at meetings or demonstrations representing themselves as VVAW.

"VVAW AI" is not a faction, caucus or part of VVAW, Inc. They are not affiliated with us in any way. "VVAW AI" is actually the creation of an obscure ultra-

left sect known as the Revolutionary Communist Party and is designed to pimp off VVAW's long history of struggle. Their objective is to create confusion and deception in order to promote themselves.

We urge all people and organizations to beware of this bogus outfit. Don't be fooled. They are not what they claim. **Forewarned is forearmed!**

continued from page 3

In order to forward this organizing effort, Igor and I recently went to Washington, D.C. for a meeting at the VVAF offices that included Bobby Muller, Wayne Smith, John Terzano, John Greeley, Erik Gustafson, Charles Sheehan-Miles, Bob Vandiver, Joe Volk and Jason Kafoury to discuss plans for Operation Dire Distress and other veterans efforts.

The meeting was positive and helped create what I hope will be a long term alliance between various progressive sections of the veterans movement committed to turning this country away from the perilous imperial course that the Bush administration has set.

We are now establishing liaisons with Congressional allies and beginning to put in place the logistics for this operation, which we are tentatively targeting for the weekend of March 22-24. The plan would be to hold a Saturday evening program, a demonstration on Sunday and then mass lobbying in Congress on Monday.

With the threat of a US military attack on Iraq eminent, the message would have to be tailored to the immediate situation, but the scenario we discussed for the march is to have a solemn procession from the Vietnam Memorial to the Korean Memorial to the World War II Memorial site and then over to the VA headquar-

ters and the White House. At the White House we would present the VAIW petition and items of meaning to individuals in a flag draped coffin. We would also carry a large chickenhawk to express our view of those so intent on war today.

During the early 70's, VVAW actions like the Winter Soldier Investigation, Operations RAW, Peace On Earth, Dewey Canyon III, Armed Forces Days etc. played a significant part in generating broader public opposition to the Vietnam War. We can't replicate the past but we can use some of those same methods and lessons learned to arouse the American public again today.

We are also putting together a budget to get the funds to conduct this operation and beginning to put out the word to see if this date and plan is workable. I am asking each of you to sign the statement at www.vaiw.org and to let us know your thoughts.

Today we need a national coalition of veterans, family members, guard, reserve and active-duty military personal for peace so that the men and women who have first-hand knowledge of the military and war can effectively voice their opinions. I hope that we can join together for a successful effort because together we can make a difference.



Sponsored by Vietnam Veterans Against the War
and
by Vietnam Veterans of America #324

Sunday, March 9, 2003
Noon - 4:30 p.m.

SERB MEMORIAL HALL
5101 OKLAHOMA AV.
MILWAUKEE, WI

\$30 at the door,
\$25 advance admission
You must be 21 to attend.

PROCEEDS DONATED TO:
"MY LAI PEACE PARK PROJECT" AND LIBRARY OF
VIETNAM PROJECT

Contact John Zutz (414)372-0749
www.milwaukeebeerfest.com

continued from page 1

“difficult” time in a Chinese officers’ quarters, where they had air conditioning and they had to eat with chopsticks.

Then 9-11 happened and the United States really united around going after al-Qaeda. Then we began the attacks on Afghanistan and we put troops in the former Soviet Republics around Iran and Afghanistan. For the first time we were in this vast area of oil with troops and treaties.

After Iraq, the troops will not be coming home but getting ready for another adventure: Iran, after all, is also on Bush’s list. Or maybe

back to China or just maybe North Korea.

All the Chicken Hawks are a titter over Max Boot’s new book, “The Savage Wars of Peace,” which traces our glorious small wars overseas from Barbary Coast to Vietnam. That’s right Vietnam. Boot closes with a section calling for more small wars, saying it’s all up to our leaders to just be brave and be willing to “pay the butcher’s bill.”

Of course, as always, it will be some other mother’s son or daughter who will bleed.

As VVAW we have to be ready for the long haul, speaking out and making a difference, wherever possible.



PO Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640
www.vvaw.org
vvaw@prairienet.org