

2017 VFP TOM STURTEVANT CHAPTER MINUTES

February 23, 2017- Augusta, Maine

Meeting called to order by Richard at 7:05 PM

Members attending: Richard Clement, David Larsen, Martha Morrison, Regis Tremblay, Doug Rawlings, LeRoy Lowell, Monty Hoskins, Vicki Saint Amand, Mike King, Brian Clement, Peter Morgan, Rita Clement, Robin Spencer, John Morris, Clarence Smith, Dan Ellis

Richard introduced his son Brian, who is an Iraq war veteran who successfully resisted attempts by the Army to force him into a second deployment after he had been transferred to Reserve duty. Since his (honorable) discharge Brian has been a forceful opponent of US Military involvement in conflicts in the Mideast.

January Secretary's Report (by Doug Rawlings) accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report by Dan Ellis. Balance as of 2/22/2017 was \$5626.09.

Maine Share Report(Richard) : received grant of \$2915.98 from Maine Share. Nine individuals earmarked their donations for VFP.

Membership Report (Dan) : 96 members (74 currently paid-up members)

Doug reported on the calendar project. Cover will be a Shetterly portrait of Sherri Mitchell (Wabanaki attorney from Old Town). Plan is for 2000 copies to be printed and distributed. Cost is estimated to be \$4700 and Doug has submitted grant requests to cover \$3000. Rob Shetterly will provide the remaining \$700

Education/Outreach/Media : Regis reported on his film Thirty Seconds to Midnight. As of Feb. 23 it had received over 11,000 views on YouTube. It will premiere at the Curtis Library in Brunswick at 7 PM on March 10 and will subsequently be shown in numerous locations throughout the country and the world. The film has received praise from several luminaries including Helen Caldicott and Oliver Stone.

Regis requested additional funds to continue to promote the film and it was moved (Clarence) and seconded (John) that the chapter provide \$1000 (\$500 for DVDs and \$500 for travel expenses). Motion carried unanimously.

John reported on the Zumwalt 12 trial. George Ostensen (illness) and Tarak Kauff (travel) could not attend and accepted plea deal of \$140 to go to Sagadahoc County United Fund. Of the remaining ten defendants, nine were found guilty of a class E misdemeanor of Obstructing a Public Way and were sentenced to 30 hours of community service each. Bruce Gagnon could not attend the sentencing phase of the trial and will appear before the District Court in West Bath (New Meadows Road) at 1PM on Wednesday, March 1 to learn his fate. VFP members are encouraged to be there to show support for Bruce.

Richard read a letter from Peggy Akers. She has been using a \$500 gift from VFP to buy boots for homeless children from the Portland area, for which they are very grateful.

Doug reported on the Keep on Walking Forward: Movement and Music for War Tax Resistance. March 15 at UMA in Augusta. See listserv for details.

Richard reported on the Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS). Tuesday, April 18 at Congress Square in Portland. See listserv for details.

Doug reported on the 2017 Letters to the Wall campaign. He encouraged everyone with any connection to the Vietnam War to consider writing a letter for this year's Memorial Day remembrance in Washington D C.

Richard reminded members of the Maine League of Women Voters sponsored film "Equal Means Equal" (co-sponsored by us) at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick at 2:30 PM on March 19.

Richard expressed our support for and endorsement of the " Health Care is a Human Right" campaign sponsored by Maine All Care, an organization devoted to providing health care to all Maine residents. A discussion was held during which Martha provided some relevant facts regarding the inadequacies of healthcare in the United States.

Doug reported on his receipt of a letter from Lawrence Reichard (see listserv) expressing his thanks for our chapter donation of \$300 to buy books for English language classes for children in Guatemala. The students were thrilled to receive the books, which otherwise would have been unaffordable.

Doug also reported on the 23rd Annual Hope Festival to be held at the Recreation and Fitness Center at UMO in Orono on April 8. More details later.

Richard reported on the current exhibit at the Maine Historical Society on Congress Street in Portland. (through mid-April). It covers WW1 through the present and features stories from veterans including our own Doug Rawlings and Peter Morgan. Well worth a visit. Maine VFP is a sponsor.

The 25th Annual Conference of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (Bruce Gagnon) will be held in Huntsville, Alabama in April. Maine VFP will donate \$200 to Global Network to help cover expenses for the conference.

Elders for Future Generations is planning to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King's antiwar speech at the Riverside Church in NYC. The date is April 4. Doug will contact Elders to get more information and to determine how VFP might participate. The venue will probably be somewhere in Portland.

The Lenten Vigil for Disarmament will be held at BIW in Bath beginning on Wednesday, March 1 and continuing on the following Saturdays: March 4, 11, 18, and 25 and April 1, 8, and 15. The vigil is sponsored by Smiling Trees Disarmament Farm and is open to all those who advocate converting BIW to peaceful manufacturing.

Richard received a letter from a Bates College student regarding a proposal to the Maine legislature to enact "Ban the Box" legislation (removing a question from employment applications as to criminal records). The proposal is controversial and Richard will contact the Bates group to see if they would want to speak to the issue at our next meeting.

The Strand Theater in Rockland will show the film "Soldier On: Life After Deployment" on Wednesday, March 1 at 6:30 PM. The film profiles three women veterans' lives after 9/11.

Rita noted the 74th anniversary of "White Rose", the story of the execution of Sophie and Hans Scholl and Christoph Probst, students in Munich, in 1943, for distributing leaflets exposing genocidal policies of the Nazis during WW2 and how, having been born in Germany and therefore intimately aware of Nazi atrocities, she is uneasy, as we all should be, about the political climate being espoused and encouraged by the new Trump administration. While it's certainly not comparable to Nazi Germany, who knows what the future might bring?

Doug reported that Tarak Kauff, one of the Zumwalt 12, is currently in Palestine as part of a VFP action group to support Palestinians in their resistance to Israeli expansion and oppression.

Richard encouraged everyone to read the listserv posts for news of VFP and related activities.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM. Next meeting in Portland on March 30th.