

A brief history of Veterans for Peace:

July 8, 1985

VFP founded and incorporated in Maine by Jerry Genesisio (USMC/56-62), Judy Genesisio, Rev. Willard Bicket (USA/WWII), Doug Rawlings (USA/Vietnam) and Ken Perkins (USN/Korea) who were disturbed by the militancy of the United States and its violent intervention in the affairs of other nations.

1986

- 1st Nat'l Convention held in Portland, ME. Jerry Genesisio elected to serve as first National President.
- VFP members in Boston stand a 30-day vigil at the Boston Common calling for an end to U.S. sponsored violence in Central America.
- VFP members appear on the Phil Donahue TV program to debate U.S. policies in Central America.

1987

- A 17 member VFP Fact-Finding Delegation travels to Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and publishes a 38-page report that is distributed to members of the U.S. Congress.
- VFP sponsors seven-city tour for Padre Andres Giron, founder of Pro-Tierra, a peaceful land reform movement in Guatemala.

1988

- VFP proposes the "Combined Statement of Veterans" calling for an end to war as a instrument of state policy and signed on 21 January by VFP, Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (VANA) of Canada, and the Soviet War Veterans Committee. In future years, numerous other national veterans organizations from around the globe also endorse the statement.
- VFP endorses Environmental Science Project of member Joe Ryan of Tallahassee, FL who volunteers to serve in Nicaragua as a water purification expert.
- VFP supports Machine Tool Project of member Randy Parent of Caribou, ME who volunteers to go to Guatemala to build and provide training for an aluminum tool-casting operation to serve Padre Giron's land reform group.
- "Soldiers of Peace", a 28-minute video focusing exclusively on VFP's response to current U.S. policies in Central America is released. Title song written by Graham Nash. Narration by VFP member Kris Kristofferson.
- May 1988, VFP convoy to Nicaragua. A group of VFP members led by Bob Livesy sends about ten trucks, filled with food, medical supplies and toys. After linking up with two other convoys in Texas, they were stopped by President Reagan at the border in El Paso.

1989

- VFP receives invitation to send a delegation to serve as Official Observers during the February 1990 Nicaraguan elections.
- VFP leadership joins veterans from Great Britain, Canada, France, Poland, the Channel Islands, the Soviet Union, and members of the German resistance, to participate in 50th anniversary ceremonies held in London, England, acknowledging the beginning of WWII.
- Jerry and Judy Genesisio are invited to remain in Europe for a speaking tour of W Germany, E Germany and Switzerland and they visit with Afghan, Vietnamese and Lebanese child war victims being treated at Peace Village in Oberhausen, West Germany.
- VFP representatives meet with French veterans at Marseilles, France.

1990

- Fifty members serve on VFP Delegation monitoring elections in Nicaragua.
- VFP publishes 36-page treatise on the logic of abolishing war as an instrument of state policy, "Abolish War! The Last Campaign".
- Two WWII veteran/members represent VFP at 45th Anniversary of WWII Victory Day ceremonies in USSR.

- Six VFP chapters participate in organizing/sponsoring a U.S. speaking tour for a member of the Israeli organization Yesh Gvul.
- 5th Nat'l VFP Convention held in Lancaster, PA attended by official delegates of veterans' organizations in Canada, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union.
- Nat'l Office notified that VFP has received a permanent NGO seat at the United Nations.

1991

- Chapters and members organize University Teach-Ins, Town Meetings, Panel Discussions and Congressional postcard/call-in campaigns nationally to debate the Gulf War. These and other projects related to that conflict, virtually consume our entire year

1992

- VFP Delegation goes to Cuba to meet with veterans of Cuba's war in Angola. While not showing support for Castro's government, they do denounce the U.S.-led embargo of Cuba.
- VFP initiates the Pittsburgh Pact: A Declaration calling for a moratorium on global arms sales. On August 28, 1992, the Pact is also signed by Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (VANA) of Canada, Ex-Services CND of Great Britain, and Fusen Heishi no Kai of Japan. Several other national veterans organizations from various countries sign pact in the years to follow.
- VFP Founder Jerry Genesio addresses UN-NGO conference in New York on "The Consequences of Conflict".

1993

- Chapters collect vitamins and wheelchairs for shipment to wounded children in Sarajevo
- Chapters promote/distribute video "Beyond Vietnam: Lessons Unlearned" in local educational institutions.
- VFP launches Children of War Rescue Project. Pro bono hospital space/services/medical treatment is committed sufficient to meet the needs of more than 100 wounded children by June 1.
- First four wounded Bosnian children arrive for medical treatment. Three treated in Maine and one in Maryland. One month later, three wounded Serbian children arrive for treatment, two from Pristina, Kosovo and one from Belgrade. They are accepted by hospitals in ME, NY and IL.
- VFP members participate in the Operation Angel Ambulance Rescue Convoy to East Mostar, Bosnia.

1994

- ABC-TV's Good Morning America airs interview with Jerry Genesio taped in Mostar, Bosnia during rescue mission. Mostar rescue mission captures widespread media attention including Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Baltimore Sun, Manchester Union Leader, and many others (see 1993).
- VFP UN Representatives Ben Weintraub and George Kelly serve as official UN election monitors in El Salvador.
- Ian Walker honored by Manchester Union Leader in page 1 feature for his role in Bosnian rescue mission (see 1993).
- J. Genesio, VFP Executive Director, and Veterans For Peace honored by Portland Press Herald, ABC and NBC TV affiliates and awarded National Lawyers' Guild-ME Community Activist Award, Holocaust Human Rights Center of ME Take-A-Stand Award, and Amnesty International-ME Human Rights Award (see 1993).

1995

- President Ed Hart and Board Member Dave Silk invited by Zapatistas to represent VFP at peace talks with Mexican Government officials in Chiapas.
- VFP accepts invitation to become the first military veterans' organization to become a member of the International Peace Bureau based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- President Kelson and Board Member Charlie Atkins of Columbia, MO, represent VFP at ceremonies in Hiroshima, Japan, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

- At a vigil in memory of those who died in Hiroshima, New York News 1, an all-news New York City cable station, broadcasts member (and now UN Ambassador) Michael John Carley's speech in its entirety.

1996

- A dozen VFP delegates visit El Salvador as part of ongoing co-operation with the Salvadoran Association of War Wounded and Disabled.
- Rear Admiral Ralph Weymouth (Ret), VFP Board Member, is part of a mission to Cuba that includes the Deputy Director of the Center for Defense Information and a former US Ambassador.
- A VFP member's design and theme was selected for a veterans monument in Pittsburgh. It consists of children at play with the theme being that legitimate war is a last resort.
- 11th convention is held in conjunction with the University of Missouri's Peace Studies Program. It includes attendees from former allies and enemies alike.
- UN Representative Ben Weintraub and New York City Board member Michael John Carley go to Bosnia at the request of Bosnia's UN Mission. Their task is to both create attention to the ongoing suffering, and to write and present an internal report to the Bosnian government on how to better care for their recently demobilized veterans.

1997

- VFP National Headquarters moves to Washington, DC to cooperate more with other NGOs and to coordinate programs more effectively.
- Trained VFP members travel to El Salvador as election monitors.
- Board Member, Myer Pettyjohn, introduces prison programs in alternatives to violence.
- Mid-Missouri VFP enables several thousand people to see "Toward a Peaceful World Free of Nuclear Weapons" and loans the exhibition to many cities
- Annual Convention held in DC.

1998

- Annual convention in Minneapolis is highlighted by speakers such as Senator Paul Wellstone, Hugh Thompson (the man who stopped the My Lai massacre-featured on "60 Minutes"), and Daniel Ellsberg.
- VFP members, along with members of other groups, while denouncing Saddam Hussein, bring \$4 million in medical aid to Iraq where more than 500,000 children have died solely as a result of the economic sanctions.
- A VFP delegation to the Chiapas region of Mexico uncovers accounts of widespread crimes (including murder, rape, and torture) by the Mexican government against the indigenous peoples of the area.

1999

- Chapter 22 sends the "Spirit of Garberville" Peace Bus with 27 protesters to the Anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle, WA (Two arrests, no injuries). The Garberville chapter also sends a delegation to Cuba that year.
- Four VFP members participate as election monitors in El Salvador.
- VFP is a member of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Coalition to Ban the Sale and Use of Landmines.
- It was the year of the Dolls, when Sandy Kelson organized a project which collected 5000 dolls to represent the Iraqi children dying each month. In one action, the dolls were literally laid at the doorstep of Madeline Albright's home.
- Brian Willson took his arm-powered, hand-crank bicycle to the New York Marathon in November to raise money for the Vietnam Friendship Village, wearing his VFP shirt -- and finished!!

2000

- VFP begins it's most successful venture to date, The Iraq Water Project. In this endeavor, veterans raise the money to repair water-treatment facilities inside Iraq rendered inoperable due to sanctions. They conduct public awareness campaigns in the US and raise the funds needed to repair four plants in the highest-need area in Iraq. The project so far has brought clean water to over 81,000 people.

- The Puerto Rican island of Vieques became an action site for VFP members who joined with Puerto Rican veterans and island residents to mount an effective protest against the use of Vieques by the U.S. Navy as a bombing/artillery range for 60 years.
- Chapter 22 sends the "Spirit of Garberville" Peace Bus with 10 demonstrators to Columbus GA to support the "Anti-SOA" campaign.
- In an unprecedented endeavor, Chapter 22 also organized and sent 18 people to Cuba with the entire "Lost Coast Pirates" little league baseball team. The team plays three games in Havana against Cuban little leaguers.
- UN NGO Representative Michael John Carley participates in the planning sessions for the NGO presentation at the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) five year review at the UN.
- VFP Korean war veteran Woody Powell visits Kokan-ri massacre site in Korea, and makes an apology to the massacre's sole survivor. That year, VFP also participates in delegations to El Salvador, Cuba, and to Colombia, examining early implications of Plan Colombia.

2001

- Chapter 22 initiates and completes The My Lai Project. Under The My Lai Project, VFP raises \$20,000 to build a new hospital wing for the health clinic in My Lai, Viet Nam. VFP also sends a delegation of 13 to participate in the building process.
- VFP members, especially Korean War veteran Woody Powell, take part in many anniversary delegations to both Koreas. VFP eventually is a co-sponsor with the International Action Center for the Korean War Tribunal, held in New York. Mr. Powell was also a juror for this event wherein witnesses of US atrocities from 50 years ago are flown in from Korea to testify.
- UN NGO Representative Michael John Carley begins VFP at the United Nations, a monthly radio show wherein he is host.
- A VFP delegation to the Chiapas region of Mexico uncovers accounts of widespread crimes (including murder, rape, and torture) by the Mexican government against the indigenous peoples of the area.
- The National Office is moved to St. Louis, Missouri, to be managed by Wilson (Woody) Powell as National Administrator, arriving two days before 9/11.
- VFP responds to events of 9/11 with a statement expressing outrage and concern for the victims, while counseling thoughtful concern for long-term national security in preparing our national response.
- A full-page ad appeared in the New York Times featuring VFP member Greg Nees' letter to President Bush asking for calm deliberation in the formation of our post-9/11 policies. The ad was funded largely by donations from the Global Peace Campaign, a Japanese-based Peace & Justice organization.

2002

- Publicity generated by the New York Times ad, and another appearing in the Los Angeles Times after the bombing of Afghanistan stimulated membership growth. By year's end, we had grown from approximately 500 paid members to nearly 2000.
- The third Iraq Water Project delegation entered Iraq in May, accompanied by Jon Sawyer, reporter for the St. Louis Post Dispatch. Jon did a fine series of front page articles on Iraq with one day's articles dealing with the VFP project itself.
- We added three new chapters and re-vitalized several more.
- VFP provided the lead speakers at the huge (over 150,000) October 26 rally in Washington, D.C., against war in Iraq.
- VFP members led and participated in acts of civil disobedience in Sacramento, CA and Toledo, Ohio – successful efforts to prevail upon the cities of Santa Barbara, CA and Baltimore, MD to pass resolutions critical of the administration's drive to war in Iraq.

2003

- The U.S. Navy relinquishes its claim on Vieques due, in part, to VFP efforts over the last three years. A delegation was sent to celebrate and to pressure the government to clean up the site and turn it back to the inhabitants of the island.

- In April, Operation Dire Distress brought VFP members from all over the country to a highly-effective teach-in at the American University in DC, and a moving procession to the war memorials and rally near the White House, where a petition against going to war with Iraq, signed by 3000 veterans was offered to President Bush and refused.
- VFP delegations were sent to Korea, El Salvador, Iraq.
- VFP members were present in Iraq at the time of the US invasion and reported first-hand impressions from the scene.
- Our annual convention was held in San Francisco at the historically significant site of the signing of the UN charter in 1945.

2004

- Our annual convention was held in Boston, at Emerson College on the Common. Major events included kick-off speeches by Howard Zinn, Daniel Ellsberg, Dorothy Mackey, and the newly-formed Iraq Veterans Against the War, led by Michael Hoffman at Faneuil Hall – the original forum for democratic governance. The convention concluded at the Boston Public Library with speeches by Amy Goodman and a rousing send-off by Bobby Muller – Co-founder of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.
- Several new VFP chapters emerged, the total number of chapters reaches 111 and the organization has now members in every US state. The total number of paid members exceeded 4400.
- VFP media presence increased - VFP members have been featured on several television stations, radio stations and in print media. Examples are Michael Cervantes and Executive Director Woody Powell on Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman,
- VFP Chapter 54 created the “Arlington West” project, a weekly display of crosses on the beach at Santa Barbara, representing our children killed in Iraq. It has drawn media attention from all over the country. Displays like it are springing up everywhere, as a result of their efforts.
- Allen Pogue and Cole Miller arrived back in the U.S., Sept. 19, with Asraa Mizyad – a young Iraqi girl who lost an arm to an American cruise missile four years ago. She will receive a new, prosthetic arm and treatment for other wounds sustained in the attack.
- We weathered a disappointing national election, which actually increased interest in VFP, and started a newly-inspired round of public forums and demonstrations.

2005

- The Dallas University convention was most notable for the launching of Cindy Sheehan and Camp Casey in Crawford, Texas. After addressing the membership she asked for volunteers to accompany her to Crawford where she intended to ask President Bush about the “Noble” cause her son died for in Iraq. A contingent of veterans went with her in the White Rose Impeachment bus and launched a legend.
- The publicity from Camp Casey penetrated mainstream media nationwide. Riding that wave, three bus loads of veterans and Military Families Speak Out members headed for DC and further demonstrations with stops along the way to extend the message: BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW. Shortly after embarking, however, Katrina hit and a new chapter of VFP enterprise began.
- The White Rose bus, driven by Pat Tate of chapter 116, carrying Cindy Sheehan, detoured south to the Louisiana town of Covington, where they set up a communications station with their satellite system, and immediately began organizing relief supplies sent from all across the country.
- Later, in New York, Cindy Sheehan and others, with VFP support, made the public case for Bush's failure to respond adequately to Katrina related to his failing occupation of Iraq.
- The Iraq Veterans Against the Iraq War (IVAW) became an official organization with the help of VFP. Frank Corcoran devoted most of his time to nurturing the fledgling group.
- The National Office, under the direction of its new Executive Director, expanded its activities, contracted to rebuild its database to keep up with a growing membership, added staff and raised the money to pay for it.

2006

- VFP sponsorship of the newly-organized IVAW has, by this time, resulted in a highly-effective group of very active Iraq War veterans turned loose on the US public.
- At the Seattle convention, 49 IVAW members stood behind Lt. Watada as he gave a very moving speech explaining his conclusion that he could not participate in an illegal war, choosing to face a military courts marshal instead.
- At the convention, we were honored by the presence of three Korean Veteran For Peace, who came to solicit our help in organizing their newly-formed group and to stand with them in solidarity with farmers who were in the process of losing their land to the expansion of Camp Humphries in the south of Korea.
- VFP fielded a delegation of five, who met with a host of progressive Korean organizations, marched, rallied and held press conferences. We were the first ever veterans to stand with the Koreans in their efforts to rid themselves of the US military presence and achieve reunification with North Korea.
- The year was marked by a series of demonstrations held nationwide in which VFP members were involved. Example: Mike Ferner got [busted for wearing a "Veterans For Peace" t-shirt](#) in the Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center in Chicago. He was also sentenced on two felony convictions for spray-painting "Troops Out Now" on a Toledo, Ohio overpass.
- Richard Clement Pittston is a member of Veterans for Peace. His son Brian Clement, (IVAW) spent a year in Iraq. Together they marched in Bangor Maine with hundreds of demonstrators against the War.
- VFP members stood with and supported several Iraq War veterans choosing not to return to Iraq because they no longer believe in the rightness of the War: Rick Clousing, Agustin Aguao, Susan Swift, Darrell Anderson.

2007

- *January 16, 2007, Washington D.C.: First delivery of signatures to members of Congress.*
- *UFPJ March on Washington to End the Iraq War, Jan. 27, 2007*
- The Appeal for Redress will continue to collect signatures until all active duty, Guard, and active reserve soldiers are out of Iraq.
- Agent Orange Victims Lawsuit Against Manufacturers
- VFP Delegation to Korea
- Congressional visit in Washington D.C.
- *March on the Pentagon - March 17, 2007*

2008

- *The year began with two major actions; Sandy Kelson's "Troop Engagement Project" at Ft. Lewis, Georgia in February. Several other chapters followed suit around the country.*
- May 1. Near the main gate of Fort Dix, NJ, six members of VFP31 displayed a large VFP banner that said: "Know Your Options" and passed out a packet of material from IVAW and elsewhere that included information on GI Rights, the Appeal For Redress, IVAW membership and similar material.
- Scott AFB, Illinois – VFP Members greet the troops with signs of support and VFP banners, engaging in lively discussions about their mission and ours.
- On May Day, four members of Veterans For Peace Chapter 66 of Austin, Texas went to the gates of Fort Hood to put the Engagement Project into action.
- On May 1, 2008, members of North Star Chapter 146 of Veterans for Peace took up position at Fort Wainwright, Alaska to engage the troops there.
- *VFP-supported IVAW "Winter Soldier" testimonies on the eve of the 5th anniversary of the Iraq War in Washington D.C.*

- VFP AND IMPEACHMENT - On July 25, 2008, following an earlier hearing before congressman John Conyer's House Judiciary committee, VFP President Elliott Adams gave a presentation.

- VFP President Elliott Adams and four other veterans conducted a five-day fast on the parapet of the National Archives Building.