

## VFP Board Candidate Questionnaire

- 1) Please briefly describe your reason for joining the Board of Directors and what you hope to bring to the organization?

As a member of VFP UK for several years, now living in the US, I believe that I will bring a fresh, outside perspective to the board. I would also like to see more cohesion and understanding within VFP. I would like to make VFP a more international-based movement with more communication with our international counterparts. I believe that I have the energy and passion to help this happen.

- 2) Veterans For Peace has a hard time retaining members, what do you think VFP could do differently to keep members who join the organization?

I wish we would listen to each other more. I heard the phrase “active listening” at the Chicago convention 3 years ago. Once I managed to process what it means, I’ve really tried to incorporate it into my everyday life.

We need to avoid overwhelming new members. We had a couple of cases in VFP UK where Iraq and Afghanistan combat vets turned up to their first regional meetings only to be “jumped on” by certain members and told that they will be great spokespeople for VFP UK due to their combat experience. That wasn’t why they joined, and – unsurprisingly, it was the last time we saw them. People need space to heal, and that is what we need to provide.

A safe space for all members should be VFP’s number one priority to support our work towards peace and social justice.

- 3) How do you envision helping VFP expand its membership, particularly in terms of Veterans of recent wars, women veterans, and BIPOC Veterans?

Quite simply, we need to have feet on the street and social media to spread our message. I know this is particularly difficult at the moment due to COVID but it is still possible to physically protest responsibly. We also need to support other organizations and movements. When we filmed our actions in VFP UK and shared our actions through social media, our membership grew.

It is also important for white males, myself included, to understand that we are inherently racist, sexist, and fragile. It’s how we were raised. We all

have to work on ourselves, and we have to be compassionate. It will only be through a lot of hard work and self-assessed honesty that I believe we can foster an organization in which BIPOC and Women veterans will feel heard. I believe VFP has a lot of work to do in this area. We need to start by asking this question to our women and BIPOC veterans, listening and acting upon their answers.

- 4) How do you envision ensuring that VFP is a safe space for our members? VFP has passed a Code of Conduct in 2018 and 2019, but this is only a first step. What else can we do?

I suggest that before every meeting and before every action, the Statement of Purpose and the Code of Conduct are read out to those present. When I lead actions in VFP UK, I tend to choose which lines of the Code of Conduct I will read out as not all points may be relevant to a certain action. Appointing a trusted member of the Board, and appointing one trusted member of VFP per State to be a “go to person” should any issues arise could be a helpful step in making our organization safe for all.

I’m also not too clued in on “Robert’s Rules” but I think we may want to reassess if this practice is right for our organization.

- 5) What are your thoughts about VFP’s Peace At Home, Peace Abroad campaign?

I am fully behind it.

- 6) The VFP Board of Directors is striving to make directorship as accessible as possible. We conduct monthly zoom meetings, and when we meet in person VFP can and will help subsidize travel costs to ensure financial needs are not a barrier. For members who have difficulty traveling for any reason (e.g., due to work or family commitments), it is possible to attend in-person meetings by Zoom as well (which we have been doing through lockdown anyway). Will you have the time and availability to be an active member of the Board of Directors, join committees, and help with the duties and responsibilities of board members?

Absolutely. I’ll look forward to them.

- 7) What do you do, or did you do if retired, for a living?

I’m a Gardener/Landscaper by trade. I am currently applying for a visa to live and work in the US.

8) Have you served on any non-profit boards before?

VFP UK's Policy Group for the past 3 years as Events Coordinator and Chair.

9) If so, what board committee(s) were you on?

I served 2 years as National Events Coordinator where I organized all of our high profile actions including our Annual Gatherings (similar to VFP USA's Annual Convention), our march to the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day (Armistice Day), our Annual Camps (including actions at Armed Forces Day), and our Actions against the Arms Fair – held in London once every 2 years. I had the most humbling honor of leading VFP UK to the Cenotaph last November 2019.

I am currently serving as Chair of VFP UK. This position is due to be handed over to the next elected Chair on Jan 1 2021.

10) Has your work or non-profit board experience included any responsibilities in any of these areas?

Human resource/personnel: Volunteers

Legal: Yes (oversight)

Development/fundraising: Yes

Accounting/financial management: Yes (oversight)

11) When was your military service?

1993-2002

12) Where do you live?

Upstate (Central) New York

13) Do you belong to any racial or ethnic minority?

No, I am a white, privileged, male.

14) Are you a member of a VFP chapter, National Project, Working Group, or

other entity?

Member: Chapter 1001: VFP UK

Lifetime Member: VFP USA

Collaborating with members to form a central NY chapter, near Utica NY.

- 15) Please briefly describe any other organizing experience within VFP or the broader peace and social justice community.

My first appointment in VFP UK was as the South East Coordinator (This included London). I organized weekly actions/demos and monthly meetings – generally in the Capital. For the bigger events like the Arms Fair, I would meet up with other groups (CAAT, CND, EELAF etc.) to see where or how we could fit VFP UK in to make us most effective. I have organized VFP actions and written articles in conjunction with other groups to demand the release of Julian Assange.