



Rogue Valley Chapter 156 News



Newsletter of Rogue Valley Veterans for Peace Chapter 156

Visit our website at: <http://rv-vfp156.org>

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Join us for our next chapter meeting Wednesday at Loree Arthur's and bid farewell to President Emmet Band

We are sad to announce that our Chapter President Emmet Band will be stepping down as president soon because he is moving to Eugene to be with his sweetheart. Emmet has been the heart and soul of our chapter since it was formed and his exit will leave a big hole in our leadership. Luckily, we have our stalwart Vice President Daniel Guy waiting in the wings. Please join us at 6:30 p.m. this Wednesday, April 6th, to wish Emmet a fond farewell and to help us start the process of choosing a new vice president. Loree's home is at 737 NW Kinney St., Grants Pass, 97526.

Agenda for Wednesday's meeting:

1. Treasurer's Report – JD
2. Approval of March minutes
3. Losing our beloved Chapter President Emmet Band
4. Vogel Plaza recap - Ruth
5. Paul Fussell – trust donation and chapter membership – Daniel
6. Sponsoring the grave marker for the Civil War vet – Allen
7. Rogue Valley Rally to Restore Sanity, 4.15.11 Medford's Alba Park – Nick or Allen
8. Newsletter – Allen
9. Deep Listening training recap – Emmet
10. Adjourn

VFP RV Chapter 156 Member of the Month Profile: Jim Woods

Editor: If you know anything about our chapter, then you probably know Jim Woods pretty well. Jim lives in Grants Pass with his lovely wife Velma and is Navy vet and a charter member of VFP 156 and our webmaster. Jim is one of the most active members of our chapter, and he

and his wife Velma have hosted chapter meetings in their home. Jim attends nearly every event and meeting we sponsor.



Editor: Where were you born and raised?

Jim: I was born in Kansas City, MO, but consider Jacksonville, IL, as my “home town”. After high school, I attended Illinois College for one year, also in Jacksonville.

Editor: Describe how and why you went into the military.

Jim: I enlisted in the Navy in June 1966 and reported to boot camp in October of 66 at Great Lakes Naval Training Center. In January of ‘67 I started radar school, also in Great Lakes. In July I was assigned to the USS Chicago, a guided missile cruiser home ported in San Diego.

Editor: Did you serve in or near Vietnam?

Jim: The ship made two seven-month trips to the Tonkin Gulf over the next three years.

Editor: What was the ship’s main mission and what was your job?

Jim: Typically we would take station off the coast of North Vietnam where our primary mission was to control Navy and Air Force planes over the north gulf and North Vietnam and protect the carriers off the coast of South Vietnam. We often carried a helicopter for rescue missions. My job consisted almost entirely in operation and maintenance of electronic warfare equipment. I was very interested in electronics so found this job to be interesting.

Later, while looking back on what we did during the Vietnam War, I realized that our mission

was primarily to help ensure that Air Force and Navy planes could drop bombs on the North Vietnam population, often from high altitudes where accuracy was often poor. Targets sometimes turned out to be hospitals or schools.

Editor: Did you ever come under attack?

Jim: My ship was never attacked during my time aboard. During my first cruise we took a couple of weeks off to respond to the North Korean attack on the USS Pueblo, an intelligence-gathering ship operating in the Sea of Japan. On the second cruise we again responded when the North Koreans shot down an unarmed military plane, also gathering electronic intelligence.

Editor: What was the general feeling about the Vietnam War among your fellow sailors on the USS Chicago?

Jim: There were 1,200 men on the Chicago so one couldn't really know everyone. I don't remember much discussion about the Vietnam War. Many enlisted guys signed up for the Navy to avoid the draft and especially the Army to keep from having to fight the land war.

I do remember one Lieutenant Commander (O-4), our Assistant Weapons Officer refusing to go on the second trip to SE Asia. Never saw him again. I was impressed that he at least had a working conscience.

Editor: When were you discharged and what was your rank when you got out?

Jim: I was discharged in July of 1970, a little early as I was planning on going back to college in the fall semester. I was a 3rd class petty officer (E-4). Although I was offered a promotion to E-5 if I would extend my enlistment for three months, I declined.

Editor: Were you ever injured during your service in the Navy?

Jim: Although I wasn't wounded I did have six bouts of pneumonia. After quitting smoking in March of 70 my lungs have been clear.

Editor: Were you ever harassed by anti-war demonstrators when your ship returned to the United States?

Jim: I don't remember actually seeing protests of the war, at least any significant ones. Everyone watching the news on TV was aware of anti-war protests in large cities and on college campuses.

Editor: Did you return to college or go to work after your discharge?

Jim: I attended Illinois State University from September of 1970 until December of '73, earning a BS in Industrial Technology and a MS in Occupational Safety. Illinois had a military scholarship, which paid the tuition of any Illinois veteran attending a state university. I used all 36 months available from the GI Bill. As a full-time student I worked at a local radio station for

three years, usually from 20 to 30 hours per week.

Editor: Have you kept in touch with any of your buddies that you met during your years in the Navy?

Jim: Unfortunately, I am only occasionally in contact with one of my Navy buddies.

Editor: What did you do after you finished your university education?

Jim: After college I worked at several manufacturing plants. I also worked for the University of Missouri as a safety staff person for five years. I ended up working for several high technology companies over the years, winding up with 15 years at Lockheed Martin in Sunnyvale, CA. Yes, they are a very large military contractor but I was not an activist at this time.

Editor: When did you move to Grants Pass?

Jim: I retired early at age 55 at the end of 2001 and promptly moved to Grants Pass.

Editor: When did you first become active in anti-war protests or peace work?

Jim: After we moved to Grants Pass my wife, Velma, and I almost immediately started becoming active, participating in three marches against the war in Iraq in early 2003. Later we attended peace stands in front of the courthouse, joining VFP in October of 2008. The more I learned about VFP's work the more engaging it was for me!

Velma is active with Women in Black. We are also members of PFLAG and do volunteer work in the community.

Editor: Describe your experience as a member of VFP 156.

Jim: VFP members I have met and worked with have changed me. For example, I now work hard to be better informed of national and international events. Of course, it isn't possible to separate war issues and politics. Sometimes it's depressing living in such a far-right-thinking community like Grants Pass, but, as Emmet Band says, "This keeps you strong and committed." And he is right.

I'm looking forward to the VFP convention in Portland in early August.

Editor: Do you have any ideas or goals that your think the chapter should consider to further the cause of peace or improve our chapter's standing in the community?

Jim: I hope that our small chapter of Veterans for Peace will grow, not for the sake of numbers but with more excitement, energy and with new challenges. I hope we will become more effective in discussing war issues with others who may not at first agree with us. I am particularly excited about some of the writers including Chris Hedges, Paul Chappell, and Paul Loeb. And I hope that we continue being strong activists in related social justice issues including the recent political attacks on labor union rights in Wisconsin and other states and the need to have a medical delivery system that works for all of us. We have a lot to be proud of and

a lot of work ahead of us.

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