



WARRIORS FIGHT FOR PEACE

Website supports veterans' efforts to bring an end to war

It makes sense that some of the strongest advocates for peace are warriors. After all, the people who have experienced the horrors of war first-hand are in the best position to judge its necessity and efficacy.

VeteransForPeace.org is the web site for an organization of former soldiers, sailors and airmen turned pacifists. Since leaving the service, they have taken on a new mission of peace. Their five goals are on the site's Statement of Purpose:

- **To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war**
- **To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations**

- **To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons**

- **To seek justice for veterans and victims of war**

- **To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.**

The organization supports numerous peaceful movements in order to move closer to its goals. Some of them are smaller in scale and more symbolic than substantive. For instance, they want to change Veterans Day back to Armistice Day. Their position is that the day was originally designated as Armistice Day after World War I to be dedicated to world peace. They argue that after World War II it was changed to Veter-



ans Day and became a day to glorify militarism.

Other causes are more ambitious with potentially world-changing outcomes. Their effort to abolish nuclear weapons is noble but not likely to be successful any time soon.

There are many causes they support that fall somewhere between the extremes. Support for saving the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs from

privatization, declaring a formal end to the Korean War, taking a stand against Islamophobia, supporting the Women's March on the Pentagon and advocating for deported veterans are some examples.

The site has information explaining the causes it supports. There are also petitions and contact information for legislators to help viewers lend their support. The organization engages in lobbying efforts at the national and international level to influence legislation favorable to its mission.

Veterans for Peace is an unabashedly pacifist organization. They advocate for

diplomacy over military action at all times. That's an admirable goal, but not always realistic. It's undeniable that the United States has the blood of innocents on its hands from ill-advised military interventions. It's also undeniable that we have used our military might against ruthless oppressors to help innocent people who couldn't help themselves. The trick is voting in leaders who will use our power wisely in the interests of justice and peace.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.