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## ANTI-WAR VETERANS CONVERGE IN ST. PAUL

The Veterans For Peace (VFP) 2018 International Convention will be held in downtown St. Paul on August 22 - 26 at the Intercontinental Riverfront Hotel (11 Kellogg Blvd E). With a theme of End All Wars and Reclaim Armistice Day, about 300 vets and associates from over 140 chapters worldwide are expected to attend. The general public is invited. For additional information and to register go to [VeteransForPeace.org](http://VeteransForPeace.org).

Veterans for Peace, an international organization of military veterans of all ages will host workshops, panels, present speakers, host a banquet, present film screenings and provide musical entertainment. Their mission since 1985 is to build a new culture of peace, expose the costs of war, heal the wounds of war, seek justice for veterans and victims of war and end the arms race, reduce and eventually end nuclear weapons.

The Intercontinental Riverfront Hotel was chosen for its convenience and reasons that tie in nicely with topics to be discussed in workshops and plenaries. A presentation is planned by a group of local Native youth who recently traveled to Rome and voiced their concerns to Vatican officials about harm caused to First Nation People by the "The Doctrine of Discovery," a papal bull decreed by the Catholic Church in the fifteenth century. Native Historian Chris Mato Nunpa will provide historical background about this doctrine. It seemed fitting to convention organizers that a conversation like this should take place at a hotel owned and operated by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (Misi-zaagan'igani Anishinaabeg).

It is also not a coincidence that the chosen hotel is located on Kellogg Boulevard which was named after Minnesotan Frank Kellogg: U.S. Senator, U.S. Secretary of State, co-author of the Kellogg-Briand Pact for worldwide peace and the only native Minnesotan to win a Nobel Peace Prize (1929).

Other topics of timely importance include the VFP-led Korean Peace Campaign and Veteran Administration (VA) Health Care. The privatization of VA health services will be examined in depth by award-winning journalist/author Suzanne Gordon and VA health care advocates.

Of global interest: The subject of U.S. intervention in the Middle East will be discussed by activist, author and co-founder of Code Pink Medea Benjamin, Palestinian Knesset member Aida Touma, and others. Political writer/activist Ann Wright will introduce policy analyst and founder of Women Cross the DMZ Christine Ahn as the featured speaker at Saturday night's banquet (8/25). Participants are still being selected for a plenary focusing on the immigration crises at the border and topics for a variety of caucuses is in the works.

The conference won't be all speakers and plenaries. Thursday evening (8/23) there will be a two-hour riverboat cruise on the Mississippi replete with tempting finger food and music suitable for listening or dancing. Sign up on the VeteransForPeace.org registration page. The cost is \$25/person.

On Friday evening (8/24) a free public forum, The Poor People's Campaign: Intersecting Perspectives, will be held at the Central Presbyterian Church located at 500 Cedar Street in St. Paul. Several speakers from the area will talk about how various issues have impacted them. Tonia Hughes, Jayanthi Kyle and Larry Long will provide music and immigrant rights activist Rev. Daniel Romero will speak on immigration issues.

Free yoga sessions with leaders from the Veteran's Yoga Project will be available and there will be easy access to meditation and 12-step groups. There also will be a chance to read your own poetry at the end of a Poetry Soiree (8/22). Documentaries and films will be shown between scheduled events and an art exhibit is planned.

A march from the hotel to the Landmark Center will take place Sunday morning (8/26) for the closing plenary and to commemorate the signing of the Kellogg-Briand Pact 90 years ago. The public is invited to join the veterans attending the conference for this free event. Author, blogger and activist David Swanson will be joined by VFP Chapter 27 co-founder Steve McKeown and Mary Beaudoin from Women Against Military Madness (WAMM).

The conference is hosted by the Twin Cities based Veterans For Peace Chapter 27. For more information and to register go to VeteransForPeace.org. Registration options include one and two days or the full conference.

For additional information: VFP Chapter 27 office @ 612-821-9141 (messages checked twice a day) or contact Barry Riesch [bwrvp27@gmail.com](mailto:bwrvp27@gmail.com) or Dave Logsdon [dlvfp27@gmail.com](mailto:dlvfp27@gmail.com) or Jeff Roy at [Royjeff48@gmail.com](mailto:Royjeff48@gmail.com)