

VETERANS Local VFW post 8-8: 85 tests its wings

8 By PAUL BEATTY

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5888, which was kicked out of the national veterans organization earlier this year for its rebelliousness and then reinstated after a court battle, will test its right of free speech at the national VFW convention.

The convention will be in Dallas, Texas, Aug. 16 to 23.

Cmdr. Richard Anderson will be one of five convention delegates from local Post 5888 and he will carry three new resolutions, one of them calling for the federal government to charge profiteering defense contractors with treason and felony.

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ous acts.

Other resolutions ask the Reagan administration to place a moratorium on the foreclosure of small farms, and to condemn South African apartheid and divest itself from investment "in the racist government" of South Africa.

The post also will have a resolution, which was approved by the state convention and passed on to the national convention, that urges the Reagan administration to review its policies in Central America.

A tougher resolution on the same issue got the local post kicked out of the national VFW in March.

The post called for the U.S. to quit intervening in Central American affairs. After the state VFW refused to have the resolution heard at its convention, the local post had one of its members take the controversial resolution to Nicaragua.

The courier delivered a copy to the office of President Daniel Ortega and then took news releases to two newspapers in Managua.

When word of Post 5888's act reached national VFW headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., Cmdr. Billy Ray Cameron canceled the local post's charter.

He said local posts have every right to pass resolutions, but that if they are defeated at the state and national levels, then the posts have to abide by the national policies.

He said the national VFW was standing in support of Reagan's foreign policy in Central America.

Post 5888 challenged Cameron in court, arguing that its members' right of free speech was being suppressed and an agreement was reached in May that reinstated the local post's charter.

Part of the agreement, according to Anderson, is that the VFW retract statements made in the national VFW magazine.

"They painted us red," Anderson said. "They said we were affiliated with communists and that several of us had been to Nicaragua and supported the government there. They also said that all of us are Vietnam vets, which isn't true. They agreed to retract both statements."

Anderson said this morning it isn't known if the retractions were made since "all of our subscriptions to the VFW magazine have been canceled. We haven't seen a copy for two months."

One of the delegates to Dallas will be Post 5888's public relations officer, Steve Brooks.

Other delegates to Dallas will be Lee Bookout, Rubin Gomez and Evelyn J. Schoenfeld.

She is a World War II vet and will be one of the few women who have ever attended a national VFW convention.

The post is busy with fund-raisers so that Brooks, Gomez and Schoenfeld can go along.

Aug. 13, the post is having a "Dump on Rambo" event at 7:30 p.m. at the Poet and Patriot Irish Pub, 320 Cedar St. For contributions call 458-3304 or the post, 429-8345.