

✓ ^{Veterans} Maverick post gains new popularity

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SANTA CRUZ — For someone who has been a longtime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the resolution opposing U.S. intervention in Central America supported by local Post 5888 might be seen as a betrayal of VFW traditions.

The national VFW leadership may revoke the post's charter as punishment for its action.

But something else is happening, too. World War II veterans, long considered the standard bearers of national VFW policy, are joining the post since the resolution was made public.

"I really don't feel we should be in

Central America," says John "Jack" Nelson, a World War II vet and newest 5888 member. A former Evergreen, Colo., post commander, Nelson fears we may be heading for another Vietnam. "I just wanted to support a post that's willing to say that."

According to Ray Peterssen, past Santa Cruz commander, the nature of the local membership has changed dramatically. He says "85-90 percent of our members used to be Vietnam vets. Now we have almost a 50-50 balance with the World War II men that have signed up, many of them joining the VFW for the first time."

The group has had 25 new members in the last month and a half, when publicity grew about the post's stand on Central

America. Currently, there are 79 members in the post, and a post spokesman estimates that between 35 and 39 are World War II veterans.

Peterssen also notes that the post has received over 300 letters supporting the resolution. Some come from mothers, some from Vietnam veterans, but the majority are received from former soldiers of the World War II era. A New Jersey veteran's letter expresses the sentiment of many when he writes: "I have just read the newspapers about the possible expulsion of your post because of your views on Central America. As a member of the VFW for 31 years and adjutant of my post for 16 years, I want you to know I support you 100 percent."