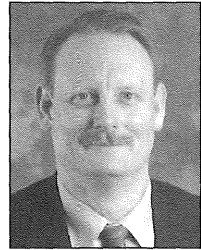


Civic duty

After more than two decades in the Navy, Adolphson sees being a legislator as another chance to fulfill his patriotic duty

By JEFF JONES

Rep. Peter Adolphson's (R-Minnetonka) short-lived movie career was just a case of being in the right place at the right time. "I challenge you to see me in any one of them," Adolphson says, laughing.



Rep. Peter Adolphson'

While serving on active duty in the U.S. Navy, two Hollywood films, *Top Gun* and *Flight of the Intruder*, were filmed aboard his aircraft carrier. "You're just in the background when the camera goes by," he says.

Adolphson's political career started in much the same way. "An open seat popped up right where I live," he said of last year's redistricting plan. "The night the court released the new lines, I thought 'Wow, this is great. It's something I've always wanted to do.'" In the election he defeated two candidates named David Larson, one a DFLer, and another who ran with the Independence Party endorsement.

After 22 years in the Navy, including the last nine in the Naval Reserves, Adolphson sees becoming a legislator as just another way of doing his duty. "I think everyone should serve their country in some capacity, whether it's in the Peace Corps, Coast Guard, or going into the armed services. I think it's something we owe the country," he says.

Military service runs in the family for Adolphson. His father served 40 years in the Navy and Adolphson's brother and two sisters also joined. One wall of his new State Office Building office is covered with plaques and photographs commemorating his time in the service. Adolphson calls it his "I Love Me" wall. After leaving active duty in 1993, Adolphson moved to Minnetonka, where he lives with his

wife, Kristin. Opposite the "I Love Me" wall is a bulletin board adorned with pictures of their four cats. Another reason Adolphson says he decided to run for office is because none of his four children are still at home.

Adolphson, who left active duty as a commander, says his experience as a military officer will help him fit in as a legislator. "(In the military) you learn a lot of good time management, a lot of budgeting skills, management skills, people skills," he said. "It gives me the ability to learn my job quickly. I don't know anywhere else in the world where you have a job and two-and-a-half to three years later you get transferred to a new job and you have to

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learn it right away."

As the only freshman representative on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, he has had to learn the intricacies of the legislative process very quickly. Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), the committee chair, said Adolphson expressed a strong desire to be on the committee and is well qualified for his position there. "Peter has a strong financial background and he's a strong contributor to the committee," Knoblach said. "It's always nice to have a first-term point of view."

Adolphson said being on the Ways and Means committee gives him a chance to see the big picture. "You get to see all the bills and you get to see the whole process, whereas if you're just stuck on one or two committees you're only seeing a slice of the pie."

Besides balancing the budget, his top

priority as a legislator is to improve Minnesota's transportation system, especially in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. He says he was inspired by the freeway system in southern California while stationed there. "(There) they don't even start a highway unless it's four lanes each way," he said.

"You can have the best metro system in the world," he added, "but if you can't get the product from outstate into the metro, you're just spinning your wheels...so to speak."

Adolphson said he walked in each of the 16 precincts of his district during his campaign. "I really enjoyed knocking on doors. It's fun. The first time you do it, you're fumbling at what to say, but then you develop a routine," he said. In addition to meeting his constituents, he said he lost about 15 pounds while campaigning.

Adolphson says he has voted in every election since he has been eligible to vote, but he was interested in politics long before that. "I was one of the few people in my class in fourth

grade, in our class poll, to vote for Richard Nixon. And he won!" he said.

DISTRICT 42A

2002 population: 36,923

Largest city: Minnetonka

County: Hennepin

Location: western Twin Cities suburbs

Top concern: "We're the only metropolitan area of this size in the country that has a two-lane each way highway system on major roads. Basically, time is money and the way our roads are right now, a lot of time is spent on the roads because they can't handle the capacity."

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