

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
Western Grand Seasons Hotel, Waupaca, Wisconsin
September 22, 2012
www.vvawi.org

The State Council Meeting was Called to Order by Vice-President Mayr at 12:00 P.M. on September 22, 2012. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all along with a Moment of Silence for our POWs/MIAs and active duty service was observed.

There was a Roll Call of Officers and Chapters by Secretary Mullarkey. President Lindbeck was excused and the At-large Region Director was absent. There was a Roll Call of Chapters by Secretary Mullarkey and the following were present: Chapters 005, 101, 206 220, 236, 324, 452, 448, 479, 529, 731, and 767. AVVA representation included: Chapters 206, 479, 635, and 767.

There were insufficient Chapters represented for a quorum, therefore an official meeting could not be held. The 22 VVA and AVVA members decided to go through the established agenda recognizing no motions could either be put forth or acted upon.

There was no Reinstatement of Chapters, selection of Parliamentarian, or Timekeeper.

The Agenda was not approved, but it was agreed by the majority to follow as a guide for these proceedings.

The June 23, 2012 (The Highground) State Council Minutes were available, but no action was taken.

The Vice-President read the President's Report, "John Margowski and I attended the VVA Leadership Conference in Irving, Texas. This was one of the better conferences/conventions that I have attended in the past. There were numerous seminars on how to run meetings, newsletter construction, The Flag, membership retention, Agent Orange, convention planning.

The only drawback that I would say is there were more seminars than one could attend during the week.

On Thursday evening we all went to a Texas BBQ at the Circle R Ranch. The highlight was getting on a 2000-pound longhorn steer. Both John and I did in fact get on the steer even though we both said we would not.

August 4th along with Chapter 448, we attended the dedication of a Medal of Honor Bench in Kewaskum, WI. The Medal of Honor recipient was Einar H. Ingman, Jr., .a Korean War veteran. Einar could not be there as he is in a retirement home in the

Rhineland area. He was presented the MOH by President Truman while recovering his injuries in Battle Creek, Michigan. His family was there to see the dedication.

August 29th I along with members of Chapter 324 and 448 attended the Grand Opening of the new Vet Center on 76th and Bradley in Milwaukee. This is the first time I believe that two chapters of VVA have worked together on a function. The two chapters prepared and served the food for the Vet Center. The new facility is great.

September 1st I had the honor of attending the Badger-Northern Iowa football game in Madison. This is the annual salute to Veterans. I had the honor of going onto the field and meet with Barry Alvarez prior to the game. During the game all veterans were honored and welcomed, and thanked for their service.

September 8th Mike Demske and I attended the stone laying at The Highground for Rev. Stube. This was a surprise to him since he did not know it was coming and he was humbled.

September 11th I was in Madison for a Meet and Greet with Governor Walker. This was a meeting of all the Veteran Service Organizations so the Governor could meet all the new VSO leaders for the year. The Governor stated that he will still continue to support veterans and his focus will be on employment for our returning vets as well as those still looking for work.

Currently John Margowski, Mike Demske and I are in Omaha, NE for the Region 6 Meeting. A full report on that meeting will be posted on the VVAWI.ORG web site upon our return.

Have a great meeting and a safe ride home.

WELCOME HOME."

Secretary Mullarkey indicated that there was no Correspondence to report.

The Legislative and Government Affairs Chairperson, Clif Sorensen was unable to attend the September Meeting; however, Secretary Mullarkey read his submitted report, which follows.

In Accordance With Public Law 110-181 SEC.598; the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a ***program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War*** and "in conducting the commemorative program, the Secretary shall coordinate, support, and facilitate other programs and activities of the Federal Government, State and local governments, and other persons and organizations in commemoration of the Vietnam War."

The Secretary of Defense shall determine the schedule of major events and priority of efforts for the commemorative program, in order to ensure achievement of the objectives specified in Law.

The **commemorative program will include** activities and ceremonies to achieve the following objectives:

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war (POW), or listed as missing in action (MIA), for their service and

sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.

2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.

3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.

4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.

5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

LEGISLATIVE AND HOMELESS VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT SEPTEMBER 2012

The current focus continues to be on **all Veterans and their families**. We are seeing and assisting many of our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, neighbors and fellow Veterans who served in hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan (Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn).

The Veterans Assistance Foundation (among others) has a **Supportive Services for Veterans Families Program** that is doing extensive outreach (866-823-8387). **Service** to our Veterans and their families is the most important item of concern to us at this time.

We have to renew our efforts on **jobs** for our returning Veterans and those who are currently in the job force or wanting to join the job force. Working closely with our friends at Department of Workforce Development – our DVOPs and LVERs – is especially crucial at this time. We participate in Veterans Jobs and Benefits Fairs.

We are concerned a great deal about the **mental health** of our Veterans. We continue to monitor the promises made by DoD, the VA and the White House. Help with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is being monitored closely. We continue to take action to prevent the growing numbers of **suicides** after service.

We continue in the development and expansion of **Veterans Treatment Courts** in Wisconsin.

The returning Veteran must be made aware of the **benefits** that are crucial to his/her transition to civilian life. All Veterans need to be provided with the best services possible. We participate in Veterans Jobs and Benefits Fairs.

I've testified, petitioned, called, visited and written our legislators and aides to do the right thing for our Veterans.

I've been in **Washington D.C.** again in June 2011, February 2012, June 2012 (and October 2012) on behalf of Veterans and their Families and Homeless Veterans. While there, I reiterated to all of the Congressional offices I visited, the VVA and I show solid support for our fellow Veterans and those who are homeless and of our efforts to eradicate the state of homelessness among our fellow Veterans. VA Secretary Shinseki and President Obama have initiated a plan to end homelessness among our fellow Veterans within five years. The clock is ticking, as we are now halfway there. I will continue to monitor that plan.

Agent Orange continues to be an issue. The VA Secretary recently added three medical conditions that can be presumptively linked to exposure to Agent Orange: B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

I will monitor the development of these important additions to the list of presumptive illnesses due to exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam.

I will also continue to monitor the work being done on behalf of our Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in Korea and Thailand (and other areas) and the effects of Agent Orange on our progeny.

The **Blue Water Navy** exposure issue remains unresolved. Check on-line for a listing of ships that docked in Vietnam harbors.

Camp Lejeune Veterans have to be aware of the time periods when the water at that military facility was contaminated. They need to contact their respective CVSOs. Recent legislation has acknowledged the toxins in the water.

There are a number of Veterans' bills that may not make their ways through the 112th Congress and will have to be reintroduced. I will track them diligently.

The VVA in Wisconsin is commended for their support and work on behalf of Veterans and their Families and Homeless Veterans, in particular.

If you have comments or suggestions, e-mail the Chair, Clif Sorenson, at clifs@sbcglobal.net.

Treasurer, Pat Craney gave and distributed the Treasurer's Report.

Pat Furno gave the AVVA Report. Pat informed those in attendance that the AVVA's website (www.avva.org) has a link on its Home page to a shopping portal Shop.com. This portal allows those using it to shop for 1,000's of items, often at a reduced price, and a percentage of the purchase goes to AVVA as a contribution. This is a fundraising opportunity for AVVA while a cost savings to the users.

Pat indicated that the VVA National Leadership Conference held in Texas was excellent and very productive for AVVA.

Virginia Nuske, Coordinator of the Scholarship Committee reported that the Scholarship Committee (i.e., Virginia Nuske, Helen Waakens, Terry Radtke, and Dennis Bohm from Chapter 206) met on March 13, 2012 to review and score the 46 submissions – seven (7) were descendants (Father/Grandfather) and one (1) a relative (uncle). The three (3) entrants who received the highest 2012-2013 scholarship scores were direct descendants. Virginia shared the three scholarship winners for 2012-2013 are:

Laura Elizabeth Heins

Taylor A. Bednar

Rebecca D. Fox

Scholarship winners will be invited to the December 8, 2012 in Waupaca.

Special Note: Information about the scholarship winners is located on the Wisconsin State Council's website at www.vvawi.org.

Secretary Mullarkey, also Director of Development and Marketing reported that the website (www.vvawi.org) has some additional features under the following tabs: Meetings, WSC's Blog, Info, Vet Issues, Scholarships Media, and URGENT. In addition to tab changes individual pages have been updated, especially the right hand column. The right hand column has some affiliate marketing (e.g., Milicruit, Military Connection, etc.) and veteran informational feeds, (e.g., Latest Veteran News, Military Health Reports, US Department of VA, etc.). Nearly all of the right hand column information changes daily, sometimes hourly. As an example if you mouse over the **Vet Issues** tab a drop down menu will show eight tabs. By doing a mouse over on **Employment** two tabs will appear. By doing a mouse over on **DOL Online** the Department of Labor's VETS (Veteran Employment and Training Service) page will appear. On that page you can mouse over and click on nearly 27 different key veteran related employment topics. The **Employment** tab also has a Wisconsin employment page where you can get up-to-date Wisconsin veteran related employment information as well as information on re-training.

Region 3 Director Tom Hoffman reported: First of all I want to express my deepest sympathy to Leon Meidam on the passing of his wonderful wife Chris, please keep Leon and his family in your prayers. I got to know Chris through the years, what a wonderful person and such an active person in the Appleton Chapter 351. She will be missed by all. May God welcome her into his house.

Another piece of bad news is our dear friend Karen Seipel, one of the all time great AVVA members in Chapter 731 Manitowoc, and State Council. She took care of our conventions and social events for many years, is not doing well, with her battle against cancer. Please keep her in your prayers as well.

There is a new place that you can take your wheel chairs and etc. for needy Veterans to get repaired. It's called:

NEW wheelchair shop **MOBILITY FOR VETS** is open Monday and Wednesday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., (715) 942-2139. **Mobility for Vets** is located just north of the Best Western Hotel on Grand Seasons Drive Waupaca, WI.

If you are interested the VA has the Flu Shots available, at Cleveland, and Milwaukee, that I know for sure, so I am thinking all the rest have them available as well.

Hoping you all have a wonderful Fall.

Remember to keep all our Men and Women serving our country in your Thoughts and Prayers.

Region 4 Director Robert Morzenti had a brief report with reference to meeting with Chapter 479.

Chapter Reports began with **Chapter 005's** report by Joe Heil, Treasurer. Joe indicated that Mike Voth, President is in Dove Care Center, a skilled nursing facility. Joe will keep the Wisconsin State Council and other interested parties as to Mike's health

situation. If interested reach out to Joe (jlheilsr@charter.net) for Mike's address or an update.

Mike raised a concern regarding the State Council's website (www.vvawi.org) relative to information and chapter information updates.

Chapter 005 is increasing its membership with a total now of 36 and possibly to a total of 40 members soon.

Joe indicated Chapter 005 is involved with the Wounded Warrior Project with a monthly donation.

Chapter 206 they had a Mid-Winter Fling as well as fundraisers (e.g., brat stand). Shawano's Chapter 206 provided two (2) scholarships – **Dollars for Scholars**: one (1) \$1,000 and one (1) \$500. In addition to signing up several new members the chapter has been involved in a number of parades and has developed a rifle squad, which will serve at funerals and holiday ceremonies. Finally, Chapter 206 has made donations to "Soldiers and Sailors Fund" and "Gold Star Mothers."

Chapter 324 reported that on August 29, 2012 members of Chapters 324 and 448 provided a luncheon of the new Vet Center in Milwaukee (pictures on www.vvawi.org). About 125 guests were served. Additionally, this past summer the chapter sold orange blossoms at several Milwaukee Brewer games.

The chapter continues to support the [Homeless Veterans Initiative](#) Food Pantry in Milwaukee and one of our Chapter member's initiative to of fixing cars for needy veterans at **no or little cost**.

Chapter 425 reported through its President, Joe Deloria Sr., who was assisting the Local 3rd Marine Division Association State Chapter, continues to be active in fundraising. In fact, since the last State Council Meeting the chapter has had a number of different fundraisers at different venues and has raised thousands of dollars. These fundraisers (e.g., Waukesha County Fair) has allowed the chapter to continue its scholarship program, County Vet-CVSO Assistance, and packages to those deployed, especially those in Afghanistan.

Since June approximately 10 different deployed service members have been sent packages – with ranks from Corporal to LTCMDR. Repeat packages have been sent to Sgt. Vukich, a Combat Medic, and her mates and Sgt. Rimmel and is reports.

In August the chapter participated in the presentation by the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, specifically the Field of Honor held in Milwaukee's Miller Park. This presentation drew more than 28,000 and BROKE the Guinness World Record!

Frank Mueller, President of **Chapter 448** reported a very busy year. The chapter's Color Guard was involved in several parades and chapter members involved in the Newburg Fire Department Parade. As of September 2012, the chapter has held more than 12 fundraisers for the year. Chapter 448 was represented at the dedication of the Memorial Bench for a Medal of Honor winner from the Korean War (The Forgotten War). (This story and pictures is on the VVA-WSC website at www.vvawi.org/news/special-events.)

Chapter 448 worked with Chapter 324 in the Grand Opening of the Vet's Center in Milwaukee. This was good opportunity to work with another Chapter to provide services to all veterans.

Chapter 448 has plans for a Veteran's Day Program at the Newburg Veteran Memorial.

Our Chapter continues to donate funds to the Homeless Veterans Initiative food pantry program in Milwaukee, along with other monthly donations to local programs needing assistance.

Chapter 767 reported its activities through Paul Pankoff, which included the Chapter's Color Guard marching in Milwaukee's Labor Day Parade and the opening ceremonies of the Milwaukee Brewers at Miller Park in Milwaukee. The Color Guard did the opening ceremony at Simmon's Island 82nd Airborne Car Show. They also participated in other activities throughout the program along with the Honor Guard during the dedication of the Vietnam monument at Pritchard Park in Racine. Finally the Color and Honor Guards participated in activities in Kenosha tracking the traveling WWII monument.

The meeting closed at 3:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary
Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin State Council
jmullarkey@wivf.org