



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
September 13, 2014
Comfort Suites - Foxfire
Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981

UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee



The Committee was Called to Order by Co-Chairperson Demske at 9:00 A.M.

Attendance: Michael Demske, Richard Lindbeck, James Mullarkey, John Margowski, Pat Furno, and Robert Piaro

September 27th AO Townhall Meeting being held in Manitowoc is well under way. Townhall posters have been placed in several locations throughout the Manitowoc and surrounding area. Mike Demske informed the group that radio and news (print) media are covering the Townhall meeting based on interviews he has participated in.

Mike Demske responded positively to Robert Piaro's questions concerning informing VAF of AO Townhall Meeting(s).

Demske shared that \$1,700 has been raised to defer costs for printing material for AO Townhall Meetings. Additionally, Mokie Porter sent completed packets for upcoming AO Townhall Meeting(s) so the team does not have to assemble the materials.

James Mullarkey was asked to provide the estimated cost for printing materials placed into the folders. Printing of materials for Wisconsin's AO Townhall Meetings is estimated at \$20.00 per folder. The cost does not include the folder or the Agent Orange booklet – both being provided by VVA, specifically through AVVA.

John Margowski informed the group that 300 copies of The Paper Safe would be on-hand for the Townhall Meeting.

Jerry Zechmeister to make AO key chains for the Townhall Meeting. Richard (Dick) Lindbeck will contact Zechmeister to learn more.

Nancy Switzer and Rick will be part of the Manitowoc AO Townhall Meeting.

Richland Center's scheduled AO Townhall Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 23rd as an evening presentation.

John, Mike and Dick attended the Wisconsin CVSO Association Conference in Elkhart Lake; which resulted in being able to do an AO Townhall Meeting with the Ho Chunk, Oneida Nation as well as Richland Center.

Mullarkey raised the question of whether the WSC's AO Team's PR should send out a flyer or press release regarding the Richland Center AO Townhall? The Committee resolved that the local contact, specifically the CVSO is responsible, but if requested the Committee would assist.

Wisconsin's AO Team was able to do a Townhall at the Leadership Conference – a true *plus* for VVA Wisconsin State Council's initiative in concert with AVVA. The Wisconsin Team also did a Town Hall meeting in North Dakota at their State Council Meeting in July.

The Committee discussed the marketability of Wisconsin's Agent Orange logo as a patch. Piaro and Tom Heitman will delve into the feasibility and cost associated with a patch. Piaro will investigate the logo's security either under Copyright, Trademark, Registered Trademark, etc.

The Committee discussed restricting funds for AO Townhall Meetings within the WSC Annual budget.

The Committee discussed the need to reach out to the American Legion at their Mid-Winter meeting; this is one way to reach out to other veteran organizations.

A draft letter to Sharon Hobbs, President of AVVA regarding the Agent Orange program was presented for review and comment. The Committee agreed with the content, but the signatories should be VVA WSC President, Vice-President, and the WI AO Co-Chairpersons. The Secretary will make the necessary changes and send the letter.

Motion to adjourn the Committee Meeting was made by Margowski and seconded by Piaro. The motion was carried without objection.

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck Called to Order the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 P.M. on September 13, 2014. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and A Moment of Silence was offered to our POWs/MIAs and active duty service. The Secretary completed Roll Call of Officers, Directors and Chapters. The President confirmed a quorum.

Of special note the following officers were present: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors from Region 1 and 4. The Chapters represented included: 005, 092, 101, 115, 236, 256, 324, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 635, 731, 767, 768, and At-Large. VVA Region 6 Director was also present. This turnout of 17 of 27 WSC Chapters represents 63% (or 67% if you include At-Large) a 15% increase from our previous WSC Meeting! Also, Chapter 425 had the member, associate, and guest turnout at the September Meeting.

There was no reinstatement of suspended Chapters.

President Lindbeck appointed John Margowski as Parliamentarian and Mike Demske as Timekeeper.

There was one change (i.e., adding Pat Furno's AVVA Report) to the Agenda; which Margowski moved for approval, Demske seconded, and was approved without objection.

The Minutes of the June 21, 2014, Wisconsin State Council Meeting was motioned for approval by Margowski, seconded by Morzenti, and approved without objection.

President Lindbeck presented the President's Report with emphasis on Wisconsin's AO activities and VVA Leadership.

John Margowski, Mike Demske, Jim Hackbarth and I – the Wisconsin Team, one Townhall in Wisconsin, one in North Dakota, one at VVA Leadership, with two more planned for Wisconsin – one in Manitowoc and another in Richland Center sponsored by the area's CVSO.

On May 24th we traveled to Black River Falls to do a presentation to the Ho-Chunk Nation. This was a first time that VVA has been able to speak to a Native American Nation regarding Agent Orange conditions.

On June 25th John Margowski, Mike Demske and I traveled to the Oneida Nation in the Green Bay area for another Agent Orange presentation. Once again we had a decent turnout and several members gave their stories. Kerry Metoxin, Oneida Nation CVSO, assisted in organizing the Townhall and was able to make more contacts for his representative. At this meeting was a representative from Congressman Ribble's office and took information back to his office.

July 18-19 we drove to the North Dakota State Council meeting in Park River, ND. Dan Stenvold, ND SC President invited us and had an outstanding program. There were also several Canadian VN Veterans there along with the Canadian VN Wall. We gave an Agent Orange presentation there and again received numerous stories.

August 4-10, I attended the National Leadership Conference in Wichita, Kansas. John Margowski, Mike Demske, Dan Scutti, Frank Mueller, and Jim Hackbarth drove to the conference and learned more on how VVA works at the Chapter, State and National level. There were numerous seminars to attend to learn more on leadership. Wisconsin was well represented at the conference, but would like to see more attendance from the chapters.

September 17th there will be an Agent Orange Townhall at UW in Manitowoc starting at Noon. *When an AO Townhall Meeting is in your region, please take the time to attend, encourage other Chapter members and members of other veteran organizations to join in and give stories. This is the way we can let our representatives in Washington, DC know to help our children and grandchildren.*

I will be going to Silver Spring MD in October for the National Board/CSCP meeting. Hopefully, I will get the opportunity to meet some of the newly elected SC presidents and interact with them.

President Lindbeck shared the anniversary celebration receipt of VVA Wisconsin State Council's Recognition of 30 years of service to America presented by John Rowan, VVA President.

Again, the next WSC meeting will be our Annual Christmas meeting. Contact Mike Demske if you plan to attend. If you are planning on attending the Christmas Party it is mandatory to contact Mike Demske so necessary arrangements for dining can be set.

John Margowski, VVA Region 6 Director, provided the WSC with an update on the upcoming VVA Region 6 Convention planned for November 8, 2014, at the Wild Rose Casino & Resort in Clinton, IA. The Region 6 Convention is designed for members of State Councils in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Convention's guest speakers include: LTG Michael S. Tucker, Commander of the First U.S. Army; John Rowan, VVA President; and John Margowski, VVA Region 6 Director.

Topics during the Convention will include the National Convention 2015, VVA National Convention Candidates, Faces of Agent Orange, Membership Strategies, Leadership Conference 2016, and the Future of VVA Region 6 – Where do you want the Region to be in the next 2-5 years?

Margowski also placed a challenge for all VVA Chapters in Region 6 – each Chapter to sign-up one new member in 2014.

Margowski added he still has over 880 claims in his possession and National has yet to come up with a solution to receive them.

Finally, Margowski encourages every VVA member, especially those in the Wisconsin State Council Chapters, Associates, and guests to contact their Congressional (U.S. Representatives and Senators) representatives urging them to support H.R. 543 (i.e., Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013) and S.1602 (i.e., Toxic Exposure Research and Military Family Support Act). For complete information on these pieces of legislation go to <https://beta.congress.gov/> and enter the legislative numbers including the H.R. or S.

Pat Craney, WSC Treasurer, provided the Treasurer's Report.

James Mullarkey, Secretary, indicated some updates to WSC website – vvawi.org, specifically WEBWeekly from VVA. WEBWeekly is the first item seen on the state's website. Mullarkey also indicated the possibility of adding a calendar to the website. This option would include both WSC important dates, meetings, AO Townhall Meetings as well as offering Chapters to place important dates and activities on the calendar.

The Secretary was directed to send a certified USPS letter to every VVA WSC Chapter President reiterating Chapter Participation Rules and Participation. Draft to be sent to Executive Officers and Region Directors for review and comment. Revised letter will be submitted for approval electronically. Upon final agreement, Secretary will send letters to every Chapter President (copy attached to Minutes).

Pat Furno, Wisconsin's AVVA State Representative, shared that By-Laws were changed per new rules. Pat encouraged Chapter AVVA members to attend VVA National Convention in Springfield, IL in July 2015.

AVVA will have a link on the VVA website (as of this writing it exists). The link is found on the Community tab at the top of the VVA site and the bottom, the Site Map section, under Partners.

Pat reiterated with the WSC that VVA is *a last man standing organization*; AVVA will remain the continuing force for the VVA, especially for the survivors (i.e., spouses, and progeny of Vietnam Veterans). The AVVA Application form is available on avva.org or through links on vva.org and vvawi.org. Yes, VVA members can become AVVA members – let your voice be heard.

Region Reports

Before WSC Region Reports were started, Margowski moved that separate line item be established in the next budget for AO Townhall Meetings with \$3,700.00 be placed on that line. Morzenti seconded the motion. The motion was carried without objection.

Tom Hoffman submitted WSC Region 3 Report in absentia. Hoffman shared four important activities he participated in: 1) Chapter 681's Dinner Meeting in May, when he had the opportunity to swear in their officers for 2014; 2) Chapter 351's Flag Day Parade in Appleton on June 24th – This parade is the largest and longest running Flag Day Parade in the U.S.; 3) laying on of the first 16 Stones on the new Gulf War Monument at the HighGround on August 2nd; and 20th Anniversary of the Sheboygan Veterans Memorial on August 20th – on display at the event was the Healing Wall and a Huey Air Ambulance.

As a VVA Member, Chapter Member, Veteran, and Region Director I would be remiss if I did not encourage all WSC Members and Associates that the school year is beginning – the means get out to the local middle and high school History Departments to be a resident historian-veteran on the Vietnam War. Encourage the department's teachers and their students *not to forget about the Vietnam War*. It is our job to keep the Vietnam War alive for the lessons it has taught us and keeps teaching us.

Report for Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, Steve House the VVA WSC Representative shared the art classes being held every Monday and Operation Dust-Off once a month (2nd Wednesday of the month) with speaker. More will be reported as time develops more activities at King.

Chapter Reports

Chapter 324 was busy in the Greater Milwaukee Area in July and August – taking part in the Wauwatosa 4th of July Parade and completing a successful Orange Blossom Fundraiser at Miller Park at the end of July and beginning of August.

Our Chapter was asked to set-up a table September 15th at the Milwaukee County War Memorial, specifically to discuss *Benefits for Aging Veterans*. This event will be held with many other veterans' organization aimed at answering a myriad of questions for older veterans.

Chapter 351 reported their active education program including a traveling display for schools. The Chapter completed a bike ride to The HighGround. The Chapter had two successful activities including a Spring Orange Blossom fundraising and a POW Drive.

Chapter 425 began July with a three day fundraising event on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The Chapter participated in a Flag Pole dedication July 3rd in the City of Waukesha. On the 4th of July our Color Guard marched in the City of Waukesha Parade. Sadly on July 8th our Chapter's members reflected on the passing of AVVA member Gene Northrop. July 16th through the 20th members set-up and staffed our Chapter's booth at the Waukesha County State Fair. For our members' efforts our Chapter's Booth was awarded *Best In Show* at the Fair. July 26th one of our members successfully did a fundraiser at a local retailer. July ended with our Chapter's Color Guard marching in the Dousman Derby Day Parade – for our efforts and professionalism our Color Guard was awarded “1st Place.”

Our Chapter was represented at *Wings over Waukesha* held on August 23rd and 24th. The Chapter thanks VVA member Jerry Keith and his wife AVVA member Ruth for representing the Chapter at this two-day event.

Chapter President Joseph Deloria, Vice-President Mike Martinez, and AVVA member Ruth Keith represented the Chapter and paid respects on behalf of VVA Chapter 425 to the family of fallen Iraq and Afghanistan Combat Veteran Nathan Thomas. Unfortunately, Thomas' death was a suicide – more than 22 veterans commit suicide each day!

In September we had one fundraising event. Unfortunately, weather hampered a truly successful event.

Chapter 437 worked hard in July beginning with 4th of July week's Sawdust Days in Oshkosh when we assisted AMVETS Post 7 in the only concession tent with food and beer – we ran out of hamburgers and went through 24 kegs of beer. This was much more successful than last year. The Chapter also assisted in both organizing and participating in the 4th of July Parade.

In September our Chapter is planning a *POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony* with Steve House as guest speaker.

October the Chapter will be having our Annual Orange Blossom Drive in four stores in Oshkosh. We are very hopeful the fund drive will be successful because with the money we raise will be used for our Christmas projects in the community.

Chapter 448 had a successful summer with our brat fries and parades. We sold Orange Blossoms prior to Memorial Day with two more scheduled for Miller Park in September as well as one scheduled for POW/MIA Day.

The Chapter assisted the Newburg Fire Department with their annual Fireman's Picnic and Parade. Following the parade the Newburg Fireman honored the Chapter for our Service.

Terry Vrana's Military Jeep was a *big hit* at the Washington County Fair for the Veterans' Day at the Fair in July.

Our Chapter made a donation to the Rick Kemp Foundation (www.therickkempfoundation.org), a group that provides scholarships in Martial Arts, Academic Scholarships, Equine assistance for Veterans through Horses for Heroes. Rick was an Army Ranger passed away following a training accident.

Jim Hackbarth, Head Chef for the day, made our annual picnic a true success - Jim truly has some neat ways to prepare meat on the grill!

The Chapter purchased and installed a Flag Disposal Box near the Newburg Village Hall. The Chapter will properly dispose of old flags placed in the box.

The Veteran Memorial Park in Newburg is continuing to have more *Legacy Stones* purchased. On Veterans Day the Chapter will be placing and dedicating several more *Stones* and a donated carved angel.

Chapter 479, reported by Gary Moll, reported in August the Chapter in cooperation with DAV Chapter 31 held a successful Brat Fry in Statford. In the same month the Chapter participated in the *Week of Honor and Remembrance* at The HighGround including: escorting The Moving Wall to The HighGround, placed a wreath and plaque at the Traveling Vietnam Veterans Wall, held a Brat Fry, VVA Chapter Member Milo Gorden gave a moving speech, and Chapter members pulled "Guard Duty" for 24 hours.

The Chapter has two planned activities, specifically Veterans Day Ceremony at the VFW in Wausau and Quarterly Meeting after the ceremony.

Chapter 529 reported a successful motorcycle club cookout.

Chapter 767 participated in the World War II Traveling Memorial and presented the Battle Field Cross.

A motion for Adjournment was seconded and accepted without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

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Secretary