



Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin State Council

Approved Minutes
VVA WSC Third Quarter Minutes
Waupaca, WI
September 24, 2022

Roll Call

The President requested the Secretary to call the roll: the Executive Officers were in attendance, specifically President Michael Demske (0731), Vice-President Daniel Sciuti (0425), Secretary James Mullarkey (0425), Treasurer Patrick Craney (0425), and Richard Lindbeck Executive Director (0448). Also, in attendance were VVA Region Six Director John Margowski and At-Large Director Richard Lindbeck. The WSC Region Directors in attendance were Region 4 Director Michael Johnson (0236) and At-Large Director Greg Foye (At-Large). The VVA Chapters in attendance included: 0101, 0206, 0224, 0236, 0256, 0324, 0351, 0425, 0437, 0448, 0479, 0635, 0731, 0767, 0921, 1130, and At-Large. AVVA was represented by 0206, 0351, 0425, 0437, 0635, 0767, and At-Large. With a 65 percent VVA Chapter representation a quorum was called.

The Pledge of Allegiance was delivered by members followed by a prayer by the WSC Chaplain Duane Canon.

President's Report – Michael Demske

The President called for a review of the Unapproved Minutes for June 23, 2022. John Olcott (0351) moved Minutes from June 23, 2022, should be approved as written, Duane Canon (0437) seconded the motion which was approved without objection.

Before the President gave his report Christopher Nuske, one of the Richard T. Nuske Memorial 2022 Scholarship Award Winners, was accompanied by family and friends, including Virginia Nuske. Christopher read the moving award-winning essay he submitted to the Scholarship Committee.

The agenda was accepted following a motion from Margowski, seconded by Lindbeck, and approved without objection.

The selected Parliamentarian, Tom Heitman, and Timekeeper, John Margowski.

President Demske opened his remarks with the Leadership Conference. Everyone received an orange vest at the Conference in honor of Agent Orange Day on August 10th. The POW/MIA seminar was very good. Tiny houses for homeless veterans were discussed; some have a community center and others accommodate families; there was some resistance in some locations over concerns that home values would decrease (home values *actually* increased after the construction of the houses); [America Warriors Partnerships](#) (AWP) whose mission is to partner with communities to prevent veteran suicide. Programs accomplish this by starting at the community level and understanding the unique situations of veterans and their families. AWP connects local veteran-serving organizations with the appropriate resources, services, and partners they need to support veterans, their families, and caregivers at every stage of their



“Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”



lives. AWP's ultimate goal is to improve veterans' quality of life and end veteran suicide by empowering local communities to serve them proactively and holistically before a crisis occurs.

Demske reported that VVA Chapter 0220 (Madison area) is being dissolved and two other VVA Chapters in Wisconsin have dissolved this year VVA Chapters 0618 and 1141.

Finally, President Demske stated that elections of Wisconsin Regional Directors will be held after the regular meeting today.

Treasurer's Report – Patrick Craney

The WSC Treasurer indicated the WSC still has cash in the bank and the report was presented to the Executive Officers, Regional Directors, delegates/alternates, and VVA Chapter officers in attendance.

Vice-President's Report – Daniel Sciuti

Since the PACT (...Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics), we have been inundated with commercials regarding Camp LeJeune. Many of these commercials are highly misleading and could result in attorney costs ranging from 30% to 70% of the award – i.e., up to \$100,000, plus doctor(s) costs as high as \$10,000, and a potential impact on the Veterans VA benefits and/or Social Security benefit(s). Additionally, the Veteran and/or his family is responsible for any taxes on the award which is based on \$100,000. In most cases. So first, **please** if you are planning on filing wait until VVA National's attorneys can provide sound direction, and second be sure to work with a County or Tribal Veteran Service Officer or VSO skilled in reviewing the PACT Act as it pertains to your situation. (See VVA Region 6 Director – John Margowski's report on "Camp LeJeune...", the PACT Act, and the Camp LeJeune Justice Act which is separate, but a part of the PACT Act.

Jack McManus' e-mail scam was discussed; members received an e-mail supposedly from Jack requesting donations; Jack never sent anything out; ignore and delete the e-mail if you receive it.

[My HealthVet](#) website: You won't be able to access your records if you don't update the information (under [Healthliving Assessment](#)) before 09/30/2022.

According to the VA website, flu and COVID shots ("2 for 1") and the COVID booster are available. The latest booster protects against the earlier virus and the latest virus — Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5.

There were fewer veteran suicides in 2019, specifically 6,261 for the year and an average rate of 17.2 per day which is more than occurred in 2018 (6,660 for the year which is a daily rate of 18.25. An in-depth analysis is provided in the [National Veteran Suicide Prevention: Annual Report](#).

Many counties in Wisconsin and other States need poll workers for the 2022 mid-term elections. Please check the handout [Vet The Vote](#); veterans can receive \$150 to work on election day.

John Willman (Chapter 479) pointed out that [PFAS](#) is the "Agent Orange" of the future; they are a "forever" chemical used extensively by the military; they are used for waterproofing, stain resistance, non-stick coatings, firefighting foam, etc.

Secretary's Report – James Mullarkey



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Unapproved Minutes from June 2022 were discussed; the motion to approve the minutes was made by John Olcott (0351), second by Duane Canon (0437), and approved without objection.

The Secretary informed the group the following VVA Chapters in Wisconsin are out of compliance either because of no Election Report or a VVA Chapter Annual Financial Report.

Jim requested input on the new website: Is it easy to access? Is it easy to navigate? Is it easy to print from (you should be able to print a PDF from the website without downloading Adobe Acrobat).

Jim did a “demo” of the vvawi.org website.

The “Home” tab includes information from National and WSC; and a calendar (Jim is currently the only person with the ability to add entries; this will be changed to allow others access to the calendar; for now, contact Jim if you want to add information)

VVA/WSC/AVVA tab includes information from National, State Representatives, Chapters, and At-Large; if something is underlined, it is a direct link to that person

WSC information includes standing committees; a gallery — for WI information only; election (representative is the number of delegates to the WSC; make sure you have alternate delegates on the form) and financial reports

In Memoriam: when/if Jim receives the “in Memoriam” form from a Chapter, he sends it to National. Jim searches online for information about the veteran who has passed (obituaries, etc.), compiles the information then puts it on the website. If the Chapter submitting the form wants a surviving spouse to continue to receive The Veteran, the Chapter must make that request to National.

There is also a Post Vietnam Veterans tab for information regarding post-Vietnam conflicts

The “balloon” in the lower right corner sends a text message directly to Jim so he can respond to you (it goes to the phone number he has for you); all messages are encrypted to provide additional security.

The website is a “living document” that can, AND WILL, change; let Jim know what types of changes you would like to see.

Jim and Dan Sciuti have been working with Dr. Jeffrey Whittle on his PTSD research project. If you haven’t done so, please complete the survey on vvawi.org; no personal information is retained or shared with anyone.

VVA Region 6 Director – John Margowski

The opening ceremonies at the Leadership Conference were excellent; there were many new faces.

There was a lack of coordination between VVA and AVVA concerning the seminars that were held.

There was a complete review/discussion of what went well at the Conference and what should be improved. U-Haul printed (for free) information that was included in the Conference packets; several presenters either didn’t submit anything or submitted it after the deadline so there was very little useful information in the packets. It was suggested that the Conference be shortened (2-3 days vs. 5 days) with no dinners; VVA ended up paying people to attend.

Camp LeJeune: VVA initially advised members not to sign up with an attorney to file for compensation since the attorney would need to be well-versed in VA/federal benefits (issues with overlapping and offsets to current benefits). The Camp LeJeune Justice Act, part of the PACT Act, is a new Federal Act that is separate from VA disability. This new act requires a veteran to use an attorney to file a claim; claims must be filed in the Eastern District with a limited time-frame to file; any compensation filed under this Act is subject to state and federal



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taxes. If a veteran decides to seek an attorney under the Camp LeJeune Justice Act, read the contract very carefully since a large portion of any award may go to the attorney (40%-70% was mentioned).

There previously wasn't any interest in a Region 6 Conference but John will follow up again at a later date.

Chapter 101 (Wisconsin Rapids) shared with everyone that the Wisconsin Rapids CVSO office will be holding seminars on the PACT Act on October 26 at 2:00 PM and 6:00 PM.

VVA National At Large Director – Richard Lindbeck

Leadership Conference: Agent Orange and other information were not submitted on time to be included in the Conference packets. There were questions regarding the length of the Conference.

An AVVA brochure on survivor's benefits was distributed at the National Conference and our meeting.

Richard will be in Prairie du Chien next week and will take a VVA Chapter start-up kit with him.

There are four (4) past WSC Presidents at this meeting: Bob Piaro, John Margowski, Mike Demske (also currently President), and Richard Lindbeck.

Richard reminded everyone that the life membership dues are only \$50 for VVA and AVVA (if you are a VVA member) and encouraged VVA members to join AVVA.

Veterans Affairs/Council of Veterans Programs – Vern Larson

Vern discussed the controversy at Union Grove Veterans Home. Although newspaper articles were written about hydration issues at the facility, no citations were issued for that (only 1 citation was issued for gloves not being worn). The Chippewa Falls facility just received a reward for its excellent care. Vern shared that Secretary Mary Kohlar appears to pay a lot of attention to what is going on at all the veterans' homes.

Vern noted that the coordination among numerous veteran service organizations allows veterans to have representation at State legislative meetings on veterans' issues.

AVVA Report – Pat Furno

There was a technical issue regarding submitting election results to National for the State AVVA Representative and Chapter representatives. That issue has now been resolved.

The Region 6 Deputy Director has been attending National meetings during the Director's absence.

Pat shared that there were complaints about the AVVA Leadership Conference as well.

Pat reminded us that it is critical for Wisconsin AVVA members to "step up to the plate", once again, to make sure AVVA remains a positive legacy for VVA.

Pat will discuss proposed By-Law changes at the AVVA meeting right after the State Council meeting.

Committee Reports

POW/MIA – Duane Canon

From 1/1 – 9/24/22, there were 70 WWII, 19 Korea, and 91 Vietnam KIA's recovered; there are still 1,528 unaccounted for (26 from Wisconsin). The full report with references will be on the website (vvawi.org).



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Legislative – Dan Sciuti

More than 50,000 veterans are affected by benefits offsets

HR 4350 (the National Defense Authorization Act) authorizes DOD activities and programs and includes a variety of programs. ([Congress.Gov to read](#))

HR 8398 (the Drive Act) reimburses veterans at 41.5 cents/mile while Federal employees are reimbursed at 62.5 cents/mile. . ([Congress.Gov to read](#))

HR 6961 (the Dignity for Military Sexual Trauma) deals with claims for MST. . ([Congress.Gov to read](#))

The PACT Act includes the Camp LeJeune Justice Act

Old Business:

None

New Business:

A motion was made to donate to the Kentucky and Puerto Rico State Councils for the VVA Chapters in Kentucky and Puerto Rico for flood relief. The motion was seconded; the motion passed.

A minimum of 3 people from the Oconomowoc Chapter (possibly as many as 5) will represent the Wisconsin State Council at the Massing of the Colors on Veterans Day in Washington, DC. National will provide \$4,000 for each State Council (after the event) to assist in the cost of hotel and travel expenses for the color guards.

For The Benefit of the Order:

Joe Heil, Chapter 5, has cancer; please keep him in your thoughts.

Richard Lindbeck is working with Dr. Whittle.

Dates for 2023 meetings:

- 3/18 – Waupaca
- 6/24 – Waupaca (tentatively; to be discussed further at December 2022 meeting)
- 9/23 – Waupaca
- 12/1 – 12/2 – Waupaca (Christmas Dinner, White Elephant Exchange, and Social)

Dan Sciuti brought up a recommendation out of the committee to begin 50/50 drawings at the end of each 2023 meeting beginning at the March 2023 meeting. The cost will be \$5.00 per ticket with a limit of one (1) ticket per person (all VVA and AVVA members and guests are eligible to participate). The winning ticket holder will receive 50% of the proceeds and 50% will go to the WSC. No second was needed; the motion was approved.

Duane Canon moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded; motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary
Wisconsin State Council

Joy Foye

Joy Foye
AVVA At-Large Member

